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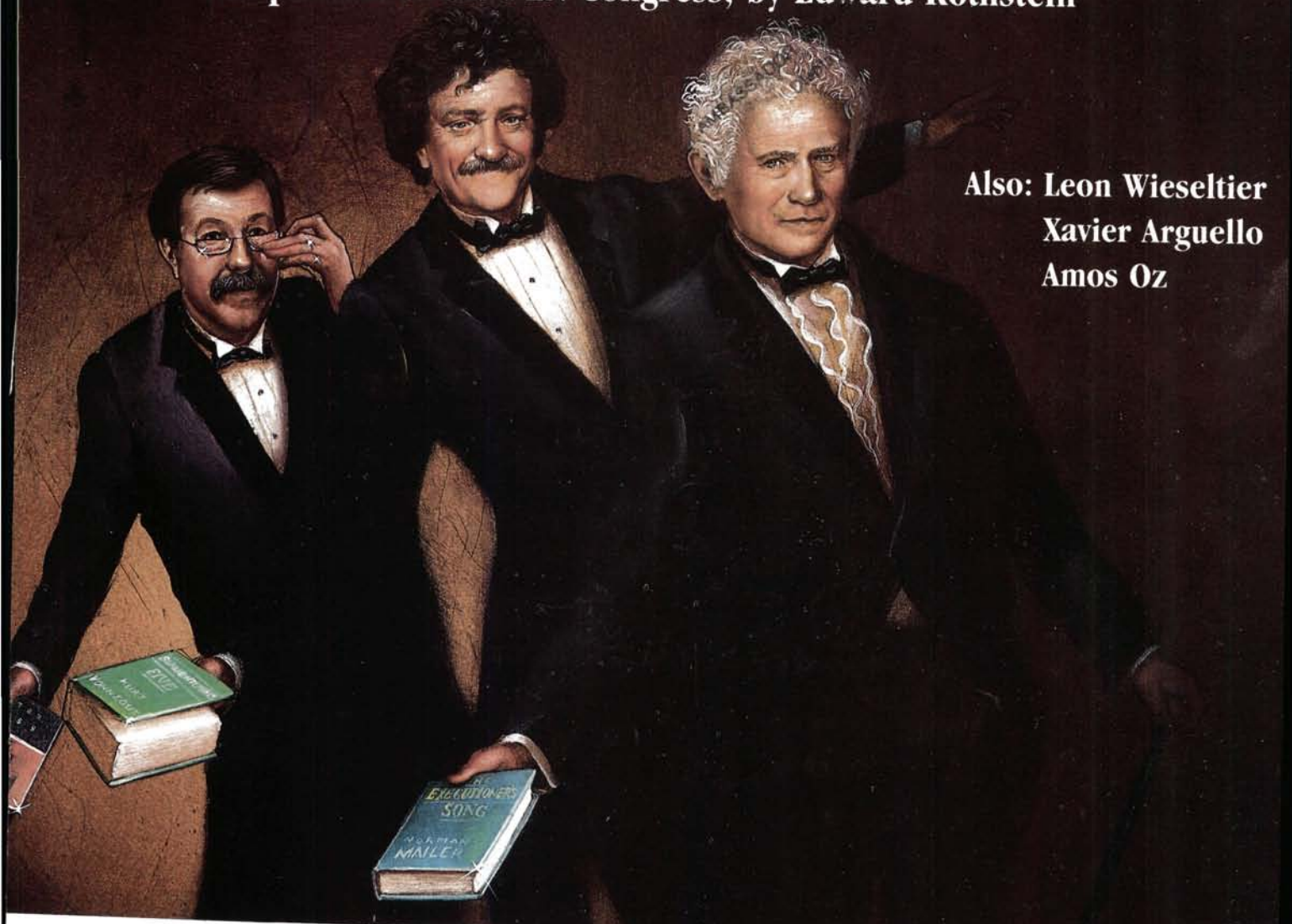

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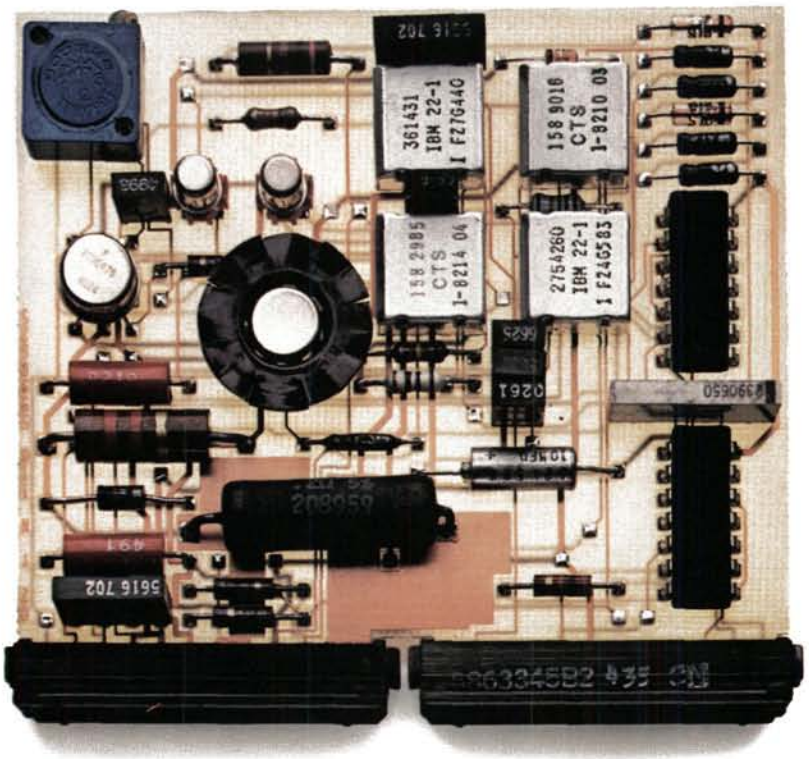

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TRB®

FROM WASHINGTON

ROCKY HORROR SHOW

TRB is on vacation. This column was written by Ann Hulbert.

"Imagine if people in our nation could see the Bolshoi Ballet again, while Soviet children could see American plays and hear groups like the Beach Boys," said President Reagan in a speech extolling cultural exchanges shortly before the summit last year. Fred Astaire proposed a similar deal in the musical comedy *Silk Stockings* (1957). Lend us your esteemed composer Boroff, he cajoled three Russian commissars, and we'll contribute a Hollywood bimbo famous for performing in a bathing suit. Together, Astaire predicted, we'll produce an international hit—"music dissolving the Iron Curtain." But Boroff was aghast when his music was reduced to schlock. "You don't understand," Astaire explained, cheerfully summing up the superficiality of his own culture: "In America we make popular songs out of the classics all the time. No one is offended, no one is insulted, no one has to listen, so no one cares."

The Soviets still don't get it. Having signed an exchange agreement at Geneva in November, Moscow is not amused by the recent anti-Soviet antics in low-brow American entertainment. At a well-publicized press conference on U.S.-Soviet cultural relations in January, a group of Soviet officials and official artists denounced the popular wave of "war-nography"—a label applied by the poet Yevgeny Yevtushenko to Sylvester Stallone's latest hits, *Rambo* and *Rocky IV*, as well as to such menacing movies as *White Nights* and *Red Dawn*. The domestic media in the Soviet Union have blustered too: "In the short interval of time that has passed since Geneva," one indignant broadcaster announced, "the forces across the ocean . . . have urgently poured out of the tightly packed sack of anti-Soviet television programs and films all of its filthy contents. . . . Even an advertisement for Miller beer is now being made with an anti-Soviet accent."

Soviet commissars detect dangerous signs of American aggression in that sack, and seem convinced it's a propaganda plot to sabotage Geneva goodwill. But of course, this stuff isn't really propaganda at all. As Astaire explained in *Silk Stockings*, the anti-Soviet classic modeled on *Ninotchka*, it is just culture tailored for popular consumption: a little beef (Stallone's and Baryshnikov's muscles glisten), with a lot of hamburger helper, served up to suit the appetite of the moment. If the Soviets really want to know how American culture works, they should scrutinize the "filthy" screen with true dialectical rigor. Beneath the dominant anti-Soviet theme, they could catch capitalist culture poking fun at itself. The self-mocking message that lurks in these movies and ads is this: the key to American culture is zealous consumerism—which means that entertainment, not propaganda, flourishes.

Take the television commercials (for RC Cola, Wendy's, and Meisterbrau, in addition to Miller). They are all variations on the same joke at the Soviets' expense, ridiculing the flaw at the heart of their political system—the absence of free choice. Thus the dumpy Soviet fashion model in the Wendy's ad has only one drab outfit in the collection she displays; the RC Cola-drinking peasants sip their favorite soda in fear of a KGB bust; the Miller drinker faces a monolithic Party rather than his pick of beer parties. But underlying the silly joke, a sharp-eyed apparatchik could report back to Moscow, is a gibe at American culture: the choice each commercial is promoting is hardly a pillar of liberty. It's the Soviets, after all, who deride the free world's "freedom" as nothing more than the right to pick Wendy's over Burger King.

The movies that the Soviets hate so much share some of this disdain for consumerism. It is a target of open criticism in none other than the hard-line *Rocky IV*. "Just look at how pathetically weak your society has become," sneers the manager of Rocky's gigantic opponent Ivan Drago, and the camera dwells on a culture reduced to debilitating materialism. Fat and lazy Paulie, the comic sidekick, is pampered by rich Rocky,

continued on page 41

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CORRESPONDENCE

WOMEN'S WORK

To the editors:

As the author of *Corporate Romance*, one of the books Barbara Ehrenreich quotes in her recent piece "Strategies of Corporate Women" (January 27), I would like to take issue with her thesis that the "small but significant" number of women who are leaving corporate life to go back to the kitchen constitute a "real" trend; that women may not be able to fit into the "boyish" corporate culture; and that cleaning kitchens and bringing up babies may be "a more personally satisfying option" than certain business problems such as what shape a catsup bottle should be.

As I read the statistics, the trend is quite the opposite. In the prime working ages of 25 to 54, 70 percent of all women are currently working, according to the U.S. Department of Labor. The projection for 1995 is that 80 percent of all women in this age group will be in the labor force. The proportion of women managers is apparently rising as well. Some women, and men too, who are unhappy in the larger corporate world may leave it and always have. Many of them are starting their own businesses, and their numbers are growing as well. The percent of self-employed women showed a 22 percent gain in the last four years, according to the Department of Labor.

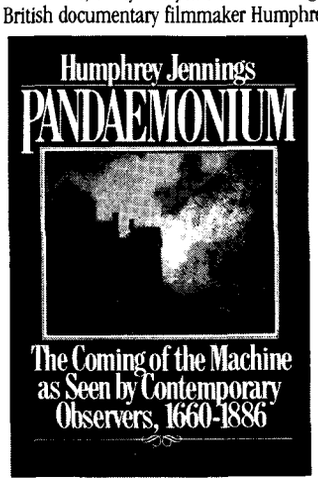
The second point I would argue with is that women don't fit into the boyish culture of business. I fear Ms. Ehrenreich is sounding like those stereotypical males who make it so difficult for women to feel comfortable in business because they want the whole pie for themselves. Did women feel comfortable in the first coed classes at former all-male Ivy League schools? Not completely, of course, but this was no reason not to have them there. Pioneering is not always easy, but it is necessary.

It may take individual women some time to see where in the commercial world they are happiest, but after at last being paid for their services, after learning so much about their previously untapped talents, and after experiencing the sense of being useful and doing a job well, I would find it difficult to believe that many of them are heading back to household boredom and total dependence on a "well-heeled" husband.

LESLIE ALDRIDGE WESTOFF
Princeton, New Jersey

"A sulphurous, splendid furnace picture of the greatest days of industry."
—Jacob Bronowski*

Here, thirty-five years after his tragically early death, is the masterwork of the extraordinary British documentary filmmaker Humphrey Jennings.



This collection of near cinematic images stunningly documents how the advent of the Industrial Revolution affected the human imagination. Jennings offers more than 370 primary texts ranging from Milton's prophetic vision in *Paradise Lost*, to works by Newton and Darwin, to the private diaries of factory workers, farmers, and others.

By allowing these powerful and illuminating voices to speak for themselves, *Pandaemonium* brilliantly conveys the spirit of the emerging modern era...its "poverty and [its] exaltation, the garish flames and the sense of creation, the squalor and the confidence and the powerful sense of self-sufficiency, the sense of a new culture which did not give a damn for anyone else and for anything that had happened before."*

"The tensions created by the coming of the machine...have seldom been given more memorable expression."—*The New York Times*

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SORDID SOCIAL SECURITY

To the editors:

How clever of Robert Kuttner to so aptly describe his own solutions to the problems of Social Security in the title of his article ("Flawed Fixes," January 6&13). However, he conveniently overlooks the real facts regarding rip-offs in the system.

First, Kuttner ignores the fact that the reason his hypothetical lawyer doesn't pay any Social Security tax on the $15,000 he puts into a Keogh plan is that none is due on it. By law the maximum amount of Social Security tax due ($4,672.80) was already paid by the lawyer on his first $39,600 of earned income.

Second, Kuttner never mentions the fact that the "straining" $20,000 worker has 50 percent of *his* Social Security tax subsidized by his employer (who might well be the above-mentioned lawyer), while the lawyer pays double because he is both employer and employee.

Third, the money the lawyer puts into a Keogh plan is not tax-free, as Kuttner implies, but tax-deferred. If the lawyer is lucky, he might be taxed at a lower rate when he withdraws his retirement savings, but he most certainly will pay taxes on it, sooner or later.

JULES I. GILPATRICK
Sacramento, California

STURGES IN REVIEW

To the editors:

In Rhoda Koenig's review of *Five Screenplays by Preston Sturges* ("Schmaltz, Schmerz, and Schmutz," December 23), she calls my introductions to the scripts "idiotic." In her attempts to justify this insult, she quotes me out of context and otherwise misrepresents me.

Koenig quotes my analysis of an error in the Monkton Hoffe story that led ultimately to *The Lady Eve*. The passage is indeed peripheral to my discussion of

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THE NEW REPUBLIC
FEBRUARY 24, 1986

HEROES CITED, FACTS SLIGHTED

It tells you something about President Reagan that the only suspense in the annual State of the Union address is over whom he has chosen as his latest American "hero." One year it was the federal worker who saved a drowning woman from the Air Florida crash. Another it was a Vietnamese refugee, a woman who was soon to graduate from West Point. Last week four youths were singled out: a school safety patroller, a science wiz, a music prodigy, and a samaritan to the homeless. This makes for dramatic television as the camera pans the House of Representatives gallery to capture the heroes in their seats next to Nancy Reagan. They stand. Congress applauds. The scene is uplifting, but it doesn't say much about the state of the union.

Reagan's evasions are not new. Gerald R. Ford was the last president willing to frankly assess the nation: in 1975 he confessed that the state of the union, mired in a recession and suffering from post-Watergate trauma, was "not good." But none has matched Reagan's grandiloquence, or his indiscriminate use of all-caps hype: Rising America, the Great American Comeback, and so on.

When Reagan got down to substance, he offered only the usual bravado about a bigger Pentagon budget, less domestic spending, and no tax increase. He knows he won't get all of these. A few hours before the speech, he disclosed to reporters that he is now willing to accept an oil import fee. His one condition was that the $8 billion a year generated by a $5-a-barrel levy would complement his tax-reform plan. The money, Reagan insisted, could be used only to offset the revenue lost from cutting the top individual rate to 35 percent and making the personal exemption $2,000 across the board. Forget the condition. Reagan has opened the tax gate. If he'll accept one kind of tax increase for one purpose, he's on the way to accepting a different kind for another purpose.

As eager as he is to slash domestic spending, the president took the cowardly approach of failing to cite specific cuts. "We must revise or replace programs enacted in the name of compassion that degrade the moral worth of work, encourage family breakups, and drive entire communities into a bleak and heartless dependency," he declared. He didn't name a single program. True, it's risky politics to tell the nation that it should get by without subsidized Amtrak fares and the Small Business Administration, and with reduced funding for child nutrition, food stamps, and low-income rent supplements. But that, after all, is what Reagan's budget for 1987 advocates: termination of 70 programs and spending cuts for scores of others. Instead of accepting his presidential obligation to face unpleasant truths (and perhaps even drum up some support for specific and worthwhile spending cuts), Reagan sketched a dazzling scheme for two-hour plane rides to Tokyo.

The speech was inadvertently revealing. It showed that the administration is running low on both ideas and boldness. After five years Reagan is bent on protecting his gains and trotting out old plans that didn't pass muster when initially proposed. He wants to keep his military buildup going full steam and lock his tax cuts in place through enactment of tax reform. He wants a line-item veto. House Speaker Tip O'Neill, who had been graciously hailed by Reagan earlier in the address, kept a frown on his face at this. There's no way it will pass. Reagan again pledged allegiance to the antiabortion cause, again gave no indication that his support is anything but rhetorical.

In Washington there's one sure indication of tepid leadership: when you confront a national problem not by proposing a solution, but by directing someone to conduct a study. Bill Moyers's recent documentary on CBS-TV has now certified the disintegrating black family as a full-scale crisis. Reagan's response was to tell the Domestic Policy Council to get back to him by December 1 with some proposals. Health care costs too high? Health and Human Services Secretary Otis Bowen will take a look at catastrophic health insurance. Exchange rates out of kilter, further inflating the trade deficit? Treasury Secretary James A. Baker will consider whether a world monetary conference is needed.

"Never has there been a more exciting time to be alive—a time of rousing wonder and heroic achievement," Reagan pleaded after referring to unpleasant subjects like the budget deficit and "the spider's web of dependency." "As they say in the film *Back to the Future*, 'Where we're going, we don't need roads.' " Of course, that's exactly what we do need, but the president remains in the clouds.

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NOTEBOOK

□ "INSPIRATIONAL READING FOR CAPITALISTS" was the headline of a full-page ad from the Navistar company in the July 29 *Wall Street Journal*. "Inspirational reading for deadbeats" would have been more accurate. Navistar, formerly known as International Harvester, boasted in the ad about its recovery from near-bankruptcy. "A government doesn't have to save a company in trouble," the ad proclaimed. "It can save itself." Yet one way International Harvester saved itself was to stiff its employees for up to $75 million in pension and other benefits and to stick a government agency with most of the bill. We called Tom Geoghegan, a Chicago lawyer (and a regular TNR contributor) who represents a group of 3,500 Harvester workers, for a rundown on Harvester's scam. In 1977 Harvester could not find a buyer for the Wisconsin Steel mill on the South Side of Chicago, in large part because the mill had large pension obligations to its employees. So Harvester transferred ownership to a corporate shell that had no assets. The plant was closed in March 1980 and all the workers were laid off. Harvester then sold off the plant's assets, but refused to pay any of the millions it owed the employees. The corporate shell—not Harvester—was liable, Harvester officials claimed. The Pension Benefit Guaranty Corporation, the federal government's insurance program for pension funds, had to step in and assume most of Harvester's $62 million worth of pension obligations. The workers are suing Navistar for roughly $20 million in remaining benefits owed to them. And the PBGC is suing to get its money back. But for all its stinginess about paying its debts, Navistar is generous in giving credit for its recovery. "The difference was people," the Navistar ad proclaims. "Our people. People in offices, in factories and in the field."

□ LEGEND HAS IT that Dutch settlers purchased Manhattan in 1624 for $24 worth of trinkets. But according to a January 28 *New York Times* article, the Indians quickly learned the ropes in Gotham. In 1625 they demanded and received perhaps 200 times as much for Brooklyn as they did for Manhattan, and managed to sell Staten Island to the white man three different times. On January 29 the *Wall Street Journal* reported that 300 years of experience in the real estate market have only made the owners of New York property more wily. It is now the locals who are offering the trinkets. Falling prices in the New York condo market have prompted sellers to offer interior decorations, fancy cars, "even grandmother's heirloom furniture" to lure prospective buyers. And it is the newcomers, who once could have their own borough for the price of a decent lunch, who are now the gullible takers. The average price of a one-bedroom condo in Manhattan, the *Journal* notes, is a modest $334,460. But "things are picking up suddenly like mad," one realtor said. "Maybe people feel now is the time to get a bargain." Those trinkets will do it every time.

□ THE FUTURE LIES AHEAD: "Go forward America, reach for the stars. . . . set our sights on the future. . . . America is on the move. . . . the future will be ours. . . . the future belongs to the free. . . . an idea whose time is now. . . . lifting the weights from the shoulders of all. . . . we cannot stop at the foothills when Everest beckons. It's time for America to be all we can be. . . . storm clouds loom darkest. . . . swamped in a sea of red ink. . . . struggling from paycheck to paycheck. . . . a bleak and heartless dependency. . . . Closing our eyes will not make reality disappear. . . . Keeping America strong. . . . The magic of opportunity. . . . we'll walk this last mile together. . . . embrace the future. . . . to make the American dream real for all. . . . you hold the destiny of our nation in your hands. . . . the call of the future. . . . stroll into the future. . . . rights of all God's children to follow their dreams. . . . America can win the race to the future. . . ."—the president's State of the Union message, February 4, 1986.

WHITE HOUSE WATCH

QUITTERS

LINDA CHAVEZ'S departure from the White House staff on February 3 did not go unnoticed. The official fanfare included a private meeting with President Reagan and a chat with TV reporters on the White House lawn. As director of the Office of Public Liaison, she was the highest-ranking woman at the White House. Now she's running for the Senate in Maryland. In contrast, a young man named Frank Gregorsky left the White House staff in January with no fanfare at all. He gave up a job working for Patrick Buchanan, the president's communications director, to return to Capitol Hill, where he edits a weekly newsletter for House Republicans. He also took a pay cut from $35,000 to $28,000.

Chavez and Gregorsky, for all their differences in status, had similar experiences at the White House. They both left after short, unhappy tours of duty. She lasted ten months, he only seven. And they left for the same reason: frustration over their inability to do much of anything at the White House. Both are highly ideological conservatives who felt they were stymied by the institutional timidity of the place. Chavez yearned to play a policy role, but the men around Chief of Staff Donald T. Regan would have none of it. (No, she doesn't blame sexism.) Gregorsky, something of a bomb-thrower, wanted to promote Reagan's agenda aggressively and rebut critics by name. Even under Buchanan, that didn't fly. To Chavez and Gregorsky, White House jobs had looked, from the outside, like the locus of real power and influence. On the inside, they found that everyone on the staff except Regan and his

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coterie had to get by with the illusion of power. That wasn't enough.

In the case of Chavez, 38 years old, who had been staff director of the U.S. Civil Rights Commission, it was remarkable that she got to the White House in the first place. Regan had been irritated by a pressure campaign organized in her behalf by conservatives. A meeting with her changed his mind, and she arrived in April. Still, Chavez wasn't brought into the West Wing; she was assigned a remote office in the Executive Office Building. In August she was granted a West Wing office, but it didn't bring influence with it. When Regan talked to the senior staff on the flap over hiring quotas for federal contractors, Chavez realized that he hadn't been fully briefed on the matter. Since she'd tracked the issue at the Civil Rights Commission, she told a Regan aide she'd be happy to brief him. She got no response. She was included in meetings on the issue only after Attorney General Edwin Meese and Labor Secretary William Brock asked for her. But when she was invited to discuss it on a Sunday talk show, Regan said no. Earlier she had been interviewed on TV about comparable worth. The next day a White House official called to say Chavez, like other staffers, was required to get prior approval for all appearances.

DRAWING BY VINT LAWRENCE FOR THE NEW REPUBLIC

While Reagan was at the Geneva summit last November, Chavez worked up plans for a Presidential Commission on the Black Family. It was to include blacks such as Harvard professor Glenn Loury and conservative economist Thomas Sowell, along with a stable of neoconservatives like Michael Novak, Irving Kristol, and James Q. Wilson, and even a liberal or two. Backed by Buchanan, Chavez got the commission idea before the Cabinet council on domestic policy. Chavez knew she was in trouble when officials at the meeting suggested workfare and a new federal jobs program as answers to the breakdown of the black family. "They had no idea of the depth of the problem," said one participant. Worse, they talked up installing Walter Cronkite as the commission chairman. Packaging had quickly become more important than substance. But the issue was just too sensitive. Instead of appointing a commission, it was decided the White House staff would quietly look into the matter.

Unlike Chavez, 30-year-old Gregorsky didn't need a campaign to get a job offer from the White House. In September 1984 he had written a fierce attack on the foreign policy drift of the Democratic Party that caught the eye of Buchanan, then a columnist and TV commentator. Shortly after he became communications chief in February 1985, Buchanan summoned Gregorsky. Buchanan wanted to put out two newsletters. *Disinformation* would chronicle Communist lies about the Reagan administration. *Misinformation* would go after the administration's liberal critics. "Buchanan said he had talked to the chief of staff about it," says Gregorsky. "He didn't say the chief of staff had approved. I should have asked." Anyway, Gregorsky declined the job, one that most Republican staffers in Congress would have leaped at. "I was scared," says Gregorsky.

But Buchanan wrote to Gregorsky, repeating his job offer. Gregorsky relented. "It took me until June 3 to get psyched up to go to the White House," where he was assigned to the Office of Public Affairs. One of his first assignments was to write a rebuttal of an attack on Reagan's spending priorities by the Children's Defense Fund. "I wanted to say some things are good, but these black kids are in a fix and Reaganism—enterprise zones, traditional values, crime control, the president's tax-reform plan—is the answer," Gregorsky says. But none of the downbeat stuff about black kids was allowed.

Next he was assigned to put together a newsletter called *Right to Reply*, in which the White House would zing its critics. (*Disinformation* and *Misinformation* had been forgotten by this point.) It was to be distributed to newspapers outside Washington, House Republican staffers, and federal officials in regional offices who act as administration "surrogates." The prototype issue took exception

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to a Jimmy Breslin column on Reagan's tax-reform proposal, accused James Reston of moral neutralism on the TWA hijacking, and trashed Benjamin Hooks for his criticism of black conservatives. Gregorsky was told to include some good news, which he did. "It was interesting to be toned down by Pat Buchanan," he says. But the newsletter still drew objections from White House officials. Gregorsky tried to accommodate them, but the momentum behind the newsletter was soon gone. The idea was dropped.

Two articles, written under Reagan's byline, ran into similar sniping. One, for the New York University *Journal on Entrepreneurism*, contained the president's vision of prosperity led by risk-taking businessmen. A Regan aide complained that it was not appropriate for an academic journal, but Buchanan got it sent to Reagan, who liked it. "Fine!" he scribbled on the memo attached to it. "I feel guilty being given credit for this. RR." Gregorsky fared less well when he prepared an article for *Reader's Digest* on "the idealistic version" of Star Wars. This time the National Security Council found fault. After a 90-minute session with two NSC staffers, "I agreed to accommodate all their objections in the draft," says Gregorsky. "I made changes in it, and I never heard from them. The NSC is supersecret, and if your boss is fading [in White House clout], as Pat was at that point in mid-September, it doesn't have to acknowledge you." The article never ran in *Reader's Digest* or anywhere else.

Before long Gregorsky found he had little to do except answer Buchanan's mail. He began to think about the operation of the White House staff. Gregorsky is a fan of Peter Drucker, the management theorist who says, among other things, that an organization must "serve its environment" and achieve measurable results. "The parts of the White House I watched or heard about violate every one of Drucker's rules, whereas the typical small business and congressional office come much closer, even if only through desperation and trial and error," Gregorsky says. "The White House combines the worst traits of a bureaucracy—fear of making mistakes or seizing responsibility—with the atmospherics of a monarchy, where proximity to the inner circle, faction, and mood mean more than objective results."

Gregorsky's complaints can be seen in part as the disappointment of a conservative firebrand who was slighted by White House officials and found that few presidential aides shared his ideological zeal. Yet others—and not only Chavez—make similar complaints about the Reagan White House, especially since Regan became chief of staff. And Gregorsky admits that, like his White House colleagues, he became a feverish gossiper: "I thought it was a revelation that Michael Deaver was still using the White House tennis courts." But Gregorsky also did something that few at the White House will emulate. Rather than merely grouse, he quit for a less prestigious job.

FRED BARNES

The GOP's affirmative action plan.

RACE FOR OFFICE

A FEW WEEKS AGO Attorney General Edwin Meese used the occasion of Martin Luther King Jr.'s birthday to chide civil rights leaders for perverting the original goals of their movement. He espoused the view, shared by the president and the Republican National Committee, that "there should be no discrimination" in decisions involving employment, promotion, or firing. Meese is leading a crusade to gut the 1965 executive order that requires corporations doing business with the government to follow certain "goals and timetables" for hiring and promoting minorities and women. What Meese didn't mention was that the GOP, while publicly repudiating racial preference by others, has undertaken to promote black candidates through its ranks in the very ways its leadership increasingly condemns. If this ethnic outreach is as natural and laudable as the RNC contends, the party may have something to learn from itself.

Take the case of Michigan's Wayne County executive, William P. Lucas. Last May Lucas became the top black Republican elected official in the country when he announced his decision to leave the Democratic Party. Asked about his widely discussed plans to run for governor, Lucas told reporters, "It would be presumptuous of me to believe as a new member I could step to the front of the line and seek that office. It has to be something I earn." The sentiment was noble but superfluous. A month earlier, Michigan's GOP chairman had promised that upon switching Lucas "would immediately hold a major leadership role" in the state party.

There's no question that Lucas worked hard to get where he is. But it's difficult to argue that he did it without a little help from his friends. Back in July 1984, when he was still a Democrat, Lucas greeted President Reagan upon his arrival in Michigan and accompanied him to a campaign stop, where he was "singled out," he says, for the honor of being seated on the dais. Whose idea was this? "The president decided to ask me to join him," says Lucas. A month later, Labor Secretary Bill Brock, a staunch defender of affirmative action, appointed Lucas to the administration's Intergovernmental Policy Advisory Committee "to make the connection between the Reagan administration and Bill Lucas," says a Lucas aide. Lucas also mentions that Vice President Bush met with him "four or five times" before his switch. An aide says these consultations were mostly political.

Rumors of Lucas's impending bid for governor were widespread by the time he announced his realignment. Bush flew in from Washington to confer with him, but refrained from a public endorsement, instead pledging, "I'll campaign for anything he wants to do." Nearby Oakland County executive Dan Murphy, another probable

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Republican contender for the statehouse, was incensed over Bush's failure to arrange a comparable meeting with him. He told reporters his deputy "did some calling to Washington to find out why the hell I wasn't" treated similarly. Embarrassed Bush staffers assured him it was an oversight.

A week after the switch, Lucas flew to Washington at the invitation of the president. He recalls that he and Reagan held an "extraordinarily long" meeting and posed afterward for photographers. "I saw it as a symbolic welcome to the Republican Party on behalf of minorities," Lucas explains. Back in Michigan a few days later, former GOP governor George Romney made an unusual move to draft Lucas as a "consensus candidate" at the expense of Murphy and other Republican hopefuls. Lucas quickly disavowed the offer. "I don't want that kind of treatment," he says.

LUCAS is not the only beneficiary of Republican affirmative action. Another is Ben F. Andrews Jr., the executive director of Connecticut's NAACP chapter since 1970. When Andrews ran for the state's first Congressional seat in 1978, the GOP went all out. In June Senator Bob Dole arrived to christen the Andrews campaign headquarters. Dole and Andrews threw off their coats to pose for photographers, and Dole plugged Andrews in television interviews and a lengthy speech. Arch-conservatives Senator Paul Laxalt and Representative Phil Crane flew in to address two Andrews fund-raisers. And New York Senator Jacob Javits, citing his NAACP affiliation, came out to lend his support. Andrews is frank about his appeal. Pointing to a vacuum of black leadership in the GOP, he acknowledges that as a black man with a strong record on civil rights, he has been eagerly welcomed into national Republican councils.

Skeptics might argue that Lucas and Andrews received special attention not because of race but because as party-switchers they would serve as role models for other Democrats reconsidering their affiliations. But this explanation can't account for the career of the Rev. Joseph P. Watkins, who at the age of 30 made a serious bid for Congress in Indiana's 10th District. Watkins, a lifelong Republican, was a campus minister at Purdue University until 1981, when he walked into the Washington office of Senator Dan Quayle's state director, Mike Miles, and asked to be hired as Quayle's assistant state director. According to Miles, Watkins emphasized the public service aspects of his ministry and "saw government as a similar kind of endeavor." Miles also notes that his office received "over 2,000 résumés" and that "hundreds of people would have been happy to get the job." Asked about his reaction to Watkins as a black applicant, Miles says: "I sensed in Joe early on an interest in his own political future. . . . I felt it would be well to get him into the system."

Three years later Watkins announced his candidacy for Congress in Indianapolis. Local GOP chairman John Sweezy says that in March 1984 the Marion County Republican Party endorsed Watkins and "actively worked for him in the primary." In September Gerald Ford came to Indianapolis for a fund-raiser—one of the 40 selected campaign stops he made on behalf of House candidates in 1984. Watkins was designated to deliver the invocation. Ford, he recalls, delivered kind remarks on his behalf. "He said he would be glad to have people like me in Congress." A month later George Bush came to Indianapolis for a fund-raising dinner and made a special plug for Watkins. And at the GOP national convention in August, Watkins was one of a handful of congressional candidates highlighted in a brief film clip prepared by the RNC and aired over the convention monitor. Why him? Watkins shrugs modestly. "For some reason, I was chosen."

If Watkins offers an illustration of how the GOP nurtures young black candidates, perhaps the case of 22-year-old Georgetown University senior and self-proclaimed congressional prospect Deroy Murdock is even more instructive. Murdock, whose parents are black immigrants from Costa Rica, calls himself a "libertarian" and advocates a policy of "color blindness." Unlike other black Republicans, he embraces not just conservative economic principles but virtually the whole right-wing agenda, identifying himself more as a conservative than as a black politician. But it is not his conservatism that makes him stand out on the horizon of future GOP leaders.

The summer after he finished high school, Murdock dropped in on former Reagan aide William Van Cleave, the director of the Defense and Strategic Studies Program at the University of Southern California. Murdock said he had been reading Van Cleave's articles on defense and wanted to discuss the subject in person. Van Cleave was amazed. He promptly offered Murdock a paid research internship—an opportunity normally reserved for USC graduate students and "no more than one or two undergraduates at any one time." What was so impressive about this 17-year-old? "His sharpness, his inquisitiveness, his knowledge," Van Cleave says, adding that Murdock's "civility," "mild-mannered courtesy," and "self-assurance" were especially remarkable.

IN 1983 Murdock became chairman of the District of Columbia branch of Young Americans for Freedom, and in August 1984 he won a seat on YAF's national board of directors. A year later, campaigning for reelection, he distributed pamphlets featuring snapshots of himself posed with Senator Orrin Hatch (for whom he had worked briefly) and Representative Jack Kemp. Accompanying the pamphlet was a flier festooned with endorsements from Hatch, Richard Viguerie, Paul Weyrich, and seven other "conservative luminaries" happy to help a 21-year-old compete with a dozen other right-wing youths for this modest post. Hatch boasted to the *Washington Post* that he has personally taken young Murdock under his wing. "Deroy," he explains, "is like a son to me."

Last summer Ben Hart, director of lectures and seminars

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at the Heritage Foundation, was looking for someone to deliver a speech on American policy toward South Africa as part of the foundation's biweekly lecture series. Heritage has an in-house expert on southern Africa, Bill Pasco. Bruce Weinraub, the think tank's foreign policy director, had toured the country in late May, and Stuart Butler, the domestic policy director, was about to embark on a similar investigation. But when Hart learned that Murdock was planning to take a tour programmed and sponsored by the Southern African Forum, an organization well known for its affiliation with the Botha government (Jerry Falwell happened to be on the same flight), he offered Murdock the speaking engagement. Hart concedes that Murdock has "no connection" to Heritage, is "the youngest of any of the speakers so far," and "isn't an expert on anything." Why give him the opportunity to laud American investment in South Africa? "Well. . . ," Hart stumbles, ". . . he's young, he's articulate . . ." The suspense is painful.

Clearly the question is not whether the Republican Party has made a special effort to assist potential black GOP officeholders, but what we are to make of the fact that it has. Ben Hart's selection of a young black man to preach patience with South Africa to a white audience is rank political exploitation. But such cynicism doesn't have to discredit the whole idea of race-consciousness. There's nothing wrong with Mike Miles's ethnically influenced decision to pick the capable Joe Watkins rather than an aspiring white politico out of a sea of applicants.

Spokespersons for the RNC and the National Republican Congressional Committee reject the comparison to affirmative action. They point out that Lucas, Andrews, Watkins, and Murdock could not have won the party's favor if they were not bright, personable, and diligent. The Republicans also argue that, unlike an employer, a political party must reach out to ethnic constituencies by elevating role models from those groups. And they observe that the party's decisions about where to allocate campaign resources, such as prestigious figures like Ford, Bush, and Dole, involve a host of considerations other than the beneficiary's "merit." In short, they say, there's no hypocrisy.

Ironically, they don't realize that what they are defending is affirmative action. As Ben Andrews observes, affirmative action is not a matter of hiring incompetents. It is a mechanism for propelling capable minorities to positions (in business or in the Republican Party) in which they are presently underrepresented. It aims to establish role models (in the eyes of Americans or in the eyes of potential black Republican voters). It acknowledges that "merit" (in picking a job applicant or a gubernatorial candidate) is an important but perhaps not decisive aspect of complex and subjective judgments. If Reagan and Meese want to pause in their ideological crusading to consider why so many Americans want affirmative action, they could start with their own party.

WILLIAM SALETAN

SDI packs a hidden punch.

OFFENSIVE STAR WARS

IT HAS BEEN nearly three years since President Reagan announced his vision of a world made safe from nuclear attack through the promise of a Strategic Defense Initiative (SDI). In that time, supporters of "Star Wars" have been hailing the president's wisdom and announcing major technological breakthroughs, while detractors point out the proposed system's numerous flaws and vulnerabilities. Lost in the tangle of opinion is what may be the single most dangerous aspect of space-based weaponry: its potential for attack.

In President Reagan's address to Congress after the Geneva summit, he assured the nation that "SDI has nothing to do with offensive weapons." Only the Soviets contest this assertion. SDI's domestic critics have focused their arguments on the technological feasibility of various defenses and their implications for nuclear stability and deterrence. In doing so, they have largely limited the terms of debate to those outlined by the administration. But Gorbachev's objections should be taken seriously. The development of Star Wars weapon technologies by both sides could result in a world of unimaginable dangers.

There is no such thing as a purely defensive weapon and there hasn't been since prehistoric times. The Stone Age warrior who lost his club quickly discovered that his heavy wooden shield was still useful for bashing an adversary over the head. More recent examples include our sales of F-16 fighter jets to Pakistan and Stinger antiaircraft missiles to Saudi Arabia. Although these were supposedly "defensive" weapons, India and Israel have been justifiably concerned that they might be used for offensive purposes.

And so it will be with the weapons of Star Wars. The offensive potential of this next generation of kinetic and directed-energy weapons is staggering, with frightening strategic implications. Consider the following possibility: suppose that technological advances in SDI research make it possible to develop space-based weapons capable of the swift and accurate destruction of targets in space *and* on the earth's surface. Such systems might even be able to destroy intercontinental ballistic missiles (ICBMs) in their silos in a matter of moments with minimal "collateral" damage. Should they prove feasible, there is no doubt that both the U.S. and Soviet military establishments would find suitable rationales for developing such weapons.

The "surgical" precision of such weapons would make the temptation of a first strike much harder to resist. Even more disconcerting is the extraordinary speed with which space-based weapons could attack. To date, none of the numerous advances in strategic weaponry over the past 20 years have been able to make a first strike credible. No matter how overwhelming one's advantages in megatonnage or accuracy, no attacker could ever escape devastation as long as the enemy had enough time to launch his

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missiles in retaliation. However, space-based weapons might reduce a half hour of warning to a mere two or three minutes. Of course, the side that felt threatened by such a system might well be compelled to shift from a "launch-under-attack" or "launch-on-warning" posture to one of "launch-under-crisis" for fear of losing the bulk of its retaliatory force before it even knew that it was being attacked. A more hair-trigger world is hard to imagine.

HOW MIGHT Star Wars technologies make such weapons possible? A space-based laser powerful enough to destroy ICBM's in flight could certainly attack satellites and terrestrial targets as well. Separate studies by Argonne National Laboratory and R&D Associates, a private defense research firm, have concluded that space-based lasers could incinerate flammable targets and set numerous fires on the enemy's home soil. Although deploying a constellation of orbiting lasers with sufficient power sources would be an extremely difficult task, these problems might be circumvented by instead building ground-based lasers that operate in tandem with orbiting targeting mirrors. Techniques such as "adaptive optics," varying wavelengths, and a precisely pulsed beam should enable ground-based lasers to overcome atmospheric interference and to reach the targeting mirrors tightly focused. As the beam is redirected earthward, it will undergo far less "angular interference" since the densest part of the atmosphere is closest to the earth's surface. Only the presence of clouds or smoke would disrupt a strategic laser attack.

Although hardened ICBM silos and command centers will probably remain invulnerable to a laser strike, many other important targets may not. These include early-warning and antiballistic missile radars, "soft" communications networks, and even mobile missiles.

Of course, such an attack would be suicidal unless it could disable much of the adversary's retaliatory force. If lasers cannot destroy ICBM silos, what space-based weapons can? Perhaps most threatening are the various "kinetic energy" weapons, which range from familiar cannon- and rocket-propelled warheads to sophisticated hypervelocity launchers. These so-called "rail guns" hurl projectiles at great speed by means of precisely timed boosts of electromagnetic energy. Although they may one day prove effective in an antisatellite role, rail guns are not likely to be used for ground attack because their projectiles would not survive reentry.

The kinetic energy weapon most likely to have the capacity to "bust silos" is the humble rocket. Imagine a fleet of satellites, each bearing a number of small missiles, that passes over the adversary's territory in low earth orbit. Such a system would superficially resemble the one envisioned in the proposals of "High Frontier," a pro-Star Wars lobbying group. In this case, the missiles would be aimed at ICBM silos and leadership and command centers. For such a system to carry out a successful first strike, before the victim could even "launch on warning," would require great speed. Hypervelocity missiles launched from altitudes of 100 miles or less could easily complete an attack in several minutes—more than rapid enough to preempt any response.

This is not a new idea. In fact, it was feared that the Soviets were developing such an "orbital bombardment system" in the mid-1960s. The idea was dropped within a few years, partly due to the immense technological obstacles and partly because of the great danger and political difficulties raised by stationing nuclear weapons in orbit. Finally, the 1967 treaty prohibiting nuclear weapons in space ended this debate. Twenty years later, though, many of the technological barriers to such a system have been overcome. Moreover, advances in warhead accuracy and guidance technology raise the prospect of using non-nuclear weapons to attack ICBM silos, thereby avoiding the many problems associated with basing nuclear weapons in space. Thus Star War technologies, paradoxically, could give conventional warheads a new and dangerous role in the strategic balance.

PERHAPS the most threatening Star Wars attack would employ a combination of these systems. The aggressor might begin his assault with a laser attack on the other side's communications networks and early-warning systems, including satellites. The "electromagnetic pulse" effects of several high-altitude nuclear explosions would further paralyze command and control systems. With the victim effectively blinded, the attacker could quickly follow with the launch of space-based missiles against such targets as silos, command bunkers, airfields, and other military facilities. Lasers might also be used to pin down missiles in their silos until the silos could be destroyed. Strategic bombers caught on the ground would be highly vulnerable as well. In a matter of minutes, the victim of such an attack might find the bulk of his ICBM and bomber force gone and his command systems in disarray—without having endured any significant damage to his cities and industries.

Assuming that communication with submarines was still possible, the leader might order his submarine-launched ballistic missiles to retaliate. However, he would then be in the position of initiating a major nuclear war against a far better armed adversary. Partially disarmed, but with his country largely undamaged, suing for peace might be the only choice. Of course, the strategic calculus here would be greatly complicated by both sides' possession of equivalent Star Wars capabilities. The odds of keeping such a conflict nonnuclear would be slim indeed.

Is such a scenario likely? Perhaps not, but it and any number of other offensive possibilities are considerably more plausible than is the president's "peace shield" vision. This is so because in a world of Star Wars technologies, the offense has a number of basic advantages over the defense.

For example, the complex tasks of sensing, tracking, and battle management are less demanding for an attacker (who has the advantage of surprise and stationary targets) than they are for the defender (who must respond instantaneously to rapidly moving missiles, warheads, and decoys). A defensive Star Wars system like that envisioned in

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SDI will have to be able to defend itself from a preemptive strike. But an offensive Star Wars system, designed to strike first, will have no such burden. Finally, the aggressor can wait until atmospheric conditions are ideal for attack, while the defender must be on guard whether it is sunny or not.

Thus it is likely that as some Star Wars technologies mature, the capability to develop offensive systems may be attained well before various defenses prove feasible. Depending on the prevailing political and military circumstances, the pressure to deploy an offensive system might be irresistible. And if we abrogate the ABM treaty and move toward deploying various weapons in space, offensive or defensive, what is there to stop the Soviets from developing a space-based attack system of their own? Certainly not the president's vague promise to "share" our technology with the Soviets. Indeed, the administration's unabashed enthusiasm for the nuclear bomb-pumped X-ray laser may well convince the Soviets that it is no longer necessary or prudent to continue observing the prohibition against nuclear weapons in space.

Why have SDI's critics yet to consider these most destabilizing aspects of space-based weaponry? Understandably, their first priority has been to expose the folly of the peace shield vision. SDI's supporters, few of whom believe in the peace shield either, have focused on the more moderate goal of complicating Soviet attack plans through some of SDI's near-term capabilities, or simply support SDI as a bargaining chip. Nobody has yet grappled with the long-term problem of imagining a world radically transformed by a myriad of futuristic military capabilities.

Neither the U.S. nor the Soviet Union has yet shown much ability to assess the long-term impact of new technologies upon a precarious strategic balance. Every new weapon, from multiple, independently targetable reentry vehicles (MIRVs) and antisatellite weapons to sea-launched cruise missiles, has provided its originator with a fleeting advantage at best, ultimately reducing the security of both. Former secretary of state Henry Kissinger candidly admitted wishing he had "thought through the implications of a MIRVed world" before deciding to deploy these systems in the early 1970s.

The greatest danger may be that as the peace shield vision collapses under the weight of its own infeasibility, critical attention may be diverted from the Star Wars technologies that will eventually bear fruit. Although these weapons may not come into being until the 21st century, many decisions determining their future will likely be made over the next decade. We must put aside such silly arguments as, "If the Russians are against it, then it must be good," or "It's only a bargaining chip." The next time we neglect to "think through the implications" might be our last.

ROBERT ENGLISH

Robert English, a Defense Department policy analyst from 1982 to 1985, is Soviet affairs specialist with the Committee for National Security.

Stars and pols ink $100 million deal.

AGE OF CELEBRITICS

Los Angeles

LET'S SEE. On March 1 we have the Great Peace March. Three thousand people walking from Los Angeles to Washington for nuclear disarmament, starting at a star-studded concert in the L.A. Coliseum. Endorsed by Madonna. Tents provided by North Face. Shoe sponsorship under negotiation. Total cost: $20 million. Arrives in Washington November 15.

Meanwhile, on May 25, there's Hands Across America. A 4,000-mile human chain from Los Angeles to New York to raise $100 million to "combat domestic hunger and homelessness." Organized by USA for Africa ("We Are the World"). Chief corporate sponsor: Coca-Cola. Computers by Compaq. Five million to ten million participants, including "the largest number of celebrities ever assembled." Ten dollars for a place in line, $25 for a commemorative T-shirt.

Did I mention that May 25 is also the date of the "Freedom Festival," a star-studded concert "huge in its scope" designed "to salute America, its music, and its heroes" and to raise money for Vietnam veterans, according to celebrity sponsor Don Johnson of "Miami Vice"?

It's getting pretty crowded out there, what with all the monumental affirmations of the American spirit. The looming prospect of compassion gridlock on May 25 was only partially alleviated when the hand-holders spurned the peace marchers' offer of help and "went south," choosing a route that will put some 360 miles between them. The Great March is currently scheduled to be somewhere between Denver and North Platte when the Great Chain steams through Albuquerque, Amarillo, and Little Rock.

True, these coming events are only the latest in a long line of attempts to harness the power of "Entertainment Tonight" and the corporate tax deduction for worthy causes. But they are the most grandiose, and the most political. Except that politics isn't really the right word. What we have here is really the birth of a new form of social activism. Not politics, but Celebritics. In politics, movie and pop stars are just one asset a candidate can throw into the fray. Celebritics is when the celebrities become so powerful that they frame the issues and run the campaigns themselves, dispensing with the boring old politicians altogether.

Celebritics represents the flowering and cross-pollination of two phenomena. The first is the susceptibility of Americans to vague demonstrations of pride under corporate sponsorship. The breakthrough event here was probably the AT&T Olympic Torch Relay. Now hosts of would-be Peter Ueberroths are organizing similar logo-laden feel-good campaigns, from the refurbishing of the Statue of Liberty to the outfitting of the next America's Cup con-

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tender. The second phenomenon was the success of Band Aid, Live Aid, Fashion Aid, "We Are the World," Comic Relief, and Farm Aid at raising money and capturing public attention for causes with strong political overtones. This spring's mega-events combine such celebrity fund-raising with torch-relay style stunts, in the name of causes once deemed very political indeed.

IN BOTH EVENTS, however, politicians are considered expendable, even disreputable, while celebrities are essential. The peace march is the work of a group called PRO-Peace, led by David Mixner, a jolly, left-oriented peace activist and veteran of the civil rights, antiwar, and gay rights movements. Mixner is frankly scornful of the "18th-century" rate of progress the politicians have made toward disarmament. His goal is to change politics from the outside, to shift the political demand curve dramatically and then sit back and watch the politicians scramble to adjust. His device—a march—is right out of the standard grass-roots activist handbook. But mere grass-roots activism could not finance a moving city of 5,000, including six mobile kitchens, 2,500 tents, a mobile bank, stage, meeting halls, and post office for a 255-day trek.

Celebrities can finance it, at least in Los Angeles, the capital city of Celebritics, where the most amazing sums of money are available for the least concrete causes if the mood and lighting are right. Mixner's first big event, the filming of a video "pre-enactment" of the march, depended heavily on the lure of stars. "More than 50 celebrities," boasted a PRO-Peace publicist—invoking the new quantitative measure of success—including Madonna (a major coup), Rosanna Arquette, and virtually the entire Brat Pack. Celebrity events have already helped Mixner raise almost four million dollars, enough to provide PRO-Peace with a full-time staff of 113 *paid* workers, more than a decent-size presidential campaign. I have been to the sprawling PRO-Peace offices and can verify the existence of many busy-looking people, maps, diagrams, scouting reports, and computers.

On the Great March itself, stars will be flown or trucked in as part of a "Celebrity Relay." It will be "like one continuous celebrity walking across the country," says PRO-Peace media coordinator Peter Kleiner. Mixner points out that Martin Luther King Jr.'s Selma-to-Montgomery march also featured bus-loads of celebrities—Peter Lawford, Shirley MacLaine, etc.—and roadside shows by Peter, Paul and Mary. But King's march, and the antiwar marches of the sixties, would have happened without celebrities. Mixner's would not.

That is even more obviously true of Hands Across America. If the offices of PRO-Peace exude an earnest idealism, the recent press conference for "Hands" was pure self-congratulatory glitz. Held at the pretentious Le Bel Age hotel in West Hollywood, with valet parking for reporters, the conference featured no politicians, but "an incredible number of celebrities," according to "Hands" promoter Ken Kragen. Starlets abounded, and the emaciation required by their profession (Susan Anton looked as though she could eat a horse) plus the lavish buffet awaiting the briefing's end gave its anti-starvation theme a piquant relevance. An "ABC Evening News" segment on poverty was shown, like a precious bit of reality in this unreal setting. Kragen, personal manager of singers Kenny Rogers and Lionel Richie, then appeared in a bright red velvet sports coat to announce that Prince had "bought" the first mile. Rogers read a telegram from Bill Cosby ("Helping out is cool"). An NBC executive announced the gift of free time on the Super Bowl telecast. Press releases listed 408 entertainment industry endorsements. When they played the "Hands Across America" theme and everybody joined hands you could have snorted the self-satisfaction with a spoon.

CAN Kragen pull it off? A certain skepticism recommends itself—i.e., whoever thought of the idea has never driven across Texas. In Arizona and New Mexico, "Hands" must convince 1,128,400 people to string themselves along the hot tarmac at exactly 3 p.m. (EDT). That's two of every three human beings living anywhere near the route. They are also to be made to pay ten dollars for the privilege, although line-crashers will presumably not be forcibly ejected by armed Kragen police. The precision logistics required for "Celebrity Coordination" alone are an advance man's equivalent of orchestrating a first-strike nuclear attack, and the man whose firm Kragen hired—at $80,000 for ten months' work—to put it all together, a middle-tier Carter operative named Fred Droz, does not have the paper credentials that would bowl over anyone in Washington.

But I would never underestimate the power of celebrity in today's America. People thought Ueberroth would never get it done either, a personal comparison Kragen is fond of drawing. Simon and Schuster is negotiating for book rights, and the networks seem to be going along. Not to mention "all the heritage, power, and emotion of the Coca-Cola system." Kragen could fail to achieve his goal of a coast-to-coast chorus line and still be a success, hogging the news (these events are made to order for Dan Rather) and raising tens of millions of dollars.

Face it, Washington. While politics on K Street slowly congeals around the sensible center, with Reagan praising Social Security and Democrats studying workfare—I mean, Chuck Robb vs. George Bush, there's an echo not a choice—what is going to fill the emotional void that clashing ideologies used to fill? Show biz, that's what. Do you think America would rather sit around mumbling about Gramm-Rudman-Hollings or hold hands vicariously with Rosanna Arquette? Now is a good time to ponder the meaning of this question for the Republic.

I am not saying nuclear disarmament and fighting poverty should be left to experts and NEW REPUBLIC writers, or that the government has a monopoly on compassion. But even if you agree with the goals of these two particular examples of Celebritics (as I do), there are at least two good reasons to worry about the trend.

The first concerns its potential to distort reality. Politicians are not a group known for their candor, but they are

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sodium pentothal addicts compared with Hollywood agents and PR men, who inhabit a world where the Big Lie is the norm and the truth a minor annoyance to be handled like an overeager fan. At Kragen's press conference a thick "information packet" was handed out to virtually everyone who wanted it—*except* reporters. When I asked for a copy, a tight-lipped publicist assured me: "You will be given all the information *you* need. . . ."

Kragen has skillfully used the PR trick of drawing the spoon-fed entertainment industry press (which has a natural interest in having a big event to cover) into the conspiracy to manage the news. This may be "the largest interactive event in the history of mankind," but Kragen reminded the press not to give it too much hype too soon. Kragen's trump card is a direct appeal to reporters' consciences. Journalists who wanted to write about his efforts to hit up TV networks for airtime for "We Are the World" were reminded they might hurt the cause of starving African babies. At the "Hands" briefing, reporters were made to feel like party-poopers if they declined to join hands during the emotional theme-playing. You don't have to be a doctrinaire adversary journalist to see the potential here for mutual deception. It's no great crime if Hands Across America says it's funding a study to "go to every one of" 150 "hunger counties," even if the truth is that researchers will only actually visit as few as ten percent of them. But HAA will quickly become as wasteful as HHS if reporters are discouraged from pointing these things out.

A second concern is more substantive. Celebritics requires emotional, universal, and non-"political" ends: starving Africans, "hungry and homeless Americans," or "the single goal of ridding the world of nuclear weapons" (an aim amorphous enough to have now been endorsed by both Reagan and Gorbachev). Anything more specific, and it might be hard to sign up Coca-Cola, and Morgan Fairchild's agent might have second thoughts.

Mixner promises to back up his abstract peace theme with pointed issues papers (attacking Star Wars, supporting a test ban), which may be why he seems to be having more trouble than Kragen closing deals with corporate sponsors. Kragen wants to have it both ways. He appeals for aid as a basic, uncontroversial human response to the immediate need of starvation. But his ambitions extend well beyond simply feeding a lot of hungry people. Fifty-five percent of USA for Africa's money (some $25 million) is not being used to feed today's starving Africans. It is sitting in the bank waiting to be spent on "recovery and long-term development projects" in eight African nations. Kragen's domestic "grants" have followed an even more lopsided pattern. Aside from $10,000 or so distributed over Christmas, none of the $500,000 spent so far has gone to actually feed or house poor people. Instead USA for Africa has funded three projects to find "long term solutions to the problems of hunger and homelessness."

If people want to give Kragen money to set up his own Ford Foundation, fine. But when USA for Africa abandons the Salvation Army business and enters the long-term social reform business, it will have to answer the same tricky questions confronted by the others who have trod this path before. How to bolster incomes without encouraging dependency? How to instill hope, patience, and discipline in a despairing and often antisocial underclass? Of the group's grants so far, the largest went to Cities in Schools, which attempts to coordinate existing social services for troubled students. USA for Africa touts this as an example of its "innovative," "venture capital projects." But Cities in Schools is hardly a new program. Its president, William Milliken, is a veteran antipoverty salesman who hustled millions from Jimmy Carter and more recently hustled $800,000 from Ed Meese. Asked about the exact nature of the "pilot projects" Kragen's group is financing, Milliken says: "We just have done this on the phone. We need to talk again on the specifics of it."

Cities in Schools may be a great thing. It may be a social-work band-aid doomed to insignificance. But that's a political judgment, and I'd rather have it made by a politician who recognizes that it's a political judgment, whose political biases I know and agree with, and whom I can vote out of office, than by well-meaning celebrities whose political views, if any, lie obscured under a thick layer of vague, press-agented compassion. Sorry, Prince.

Politicians have another virtue. Only the governments they run have enough resources to "end hunger." The $100 million Kragen hopes to raise is about eight-tenths of one percent of the budget of the food stamp program. Kragen admits the money generated by Hands Across America "will only make a dent in the overall problem." He says the issue is "not just dollars" but public awareness, and alludes to a possible "impact on legislation." What legislation? More money for food stamps? But aren't jobs preferable to a more generous dole? There's a reason why politicians debate those questions. Kragen could stack singing celebrities 4,000 miles into space and he won't have helped resolve them.

The delusion of Celebritics is that our problems reflect mainly a failure of will on the part of our elected leaders. The politicians have screwed up. They haven't ended hunger. They haven't removed the threat of Armageddon. What's wrong with them, anyway? Time for the celebrities and their fans to take over and supply the missing humanitarian willpower. There's some truth here. (Reagan's will to negotiate an arms treaty may need a little bolstering.) But warm, compassionate feelings and cold, hard cash are not enough. Progress requires choices, political ones. By avoiding and concealing these choices, Celebritics sets us up for a big fall when all the televised and merchandised outpourings of Hollywood goodwill fail to produce "solutions" to match the ratings.

"This is not about any *politics*," Hands Across America Actors' Committee co-chair Dyan Cannon declared at Le Bel Age. "This does not have anybody running for office. This doesn't have any of those labels on it. It has nothing but love to it." That's the trouble.

MICKEY KAUS

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Central America's crises continue.

AFTER THE ELECTIONS

THE inauguration of new, civilian presidents in Guatemala and Honduras in January 1986 gives the Reagan administration additional evidence to support its claim that there is a massive trend toward Western-style democratic governments in Latin America. The argument is strengthened by the fact that Vinicio Cerezo in Guatemala and José Azcona in Honduras both attained power in relatively free and open elections, a trend that was continued in Costa Rica's recent elections. As Elliott Abrams, assistant secretary of state for inter-American affairs, puts it: "Elections are now part of a broad movement toward democracy, a movement that is strengthened and reinforced each time a new election is held." Some critics of administration policies in Central America reject these claims, arguing that the elections are actually carefully managed shows, designed to give the illusion of progress while maintaining real power in the hands of the military and traditional elite families. The truth, as usual, lies somewhere between these two positions. The elections in Guatemala and Honduras are a hopeful sign in a region where reasons for hope have been notably scarce in the past decade. But elections are not enough; the basic problems of the region are not amenable to ballot-box solutions.

Vinicio Cerezo knows that substituting a civilian for a general in Guatemala's presidency doesn't resolve any of his country's basic dilemmas. The experience of Guatemala's last civilian president, Julio César Méndez Montenegro, who occupied the office from 1966 till 1970, underscores this reality. Méndez Montenegro has been quoted as declaring that throughout those four years, Guatemala actually had two presidents, himself and the minister of defense, who "kept threatening me with a machine gun." Four years of such threats destroyed Méndez Montenegro's effectiveness and credibility. Vinicio Cerezo has indicated that he would resign rather than submit to a similar fate. But he is also a realist, recognizing that assuming office and attaining power are distinct events. He talks of slowly increasing his power from an opening level of approximately 30 percent to perhaps as much as 70 percent by 1989.

Foreign observers frequently see the military as the prime obstacle to effective civilian government in Guatemala and, to a lesser extent, in Honduras. The officer corps is portrayed as corrupt, brutal, socially and ideologically allied with the most intransigent right-wing elements in society, and fearful that an effective civilian government might hold them accountable for human rights violations in a manner similar to that now taking place in Argentina. The prime task for the new civilian presidents is seen as taming the military, removing it from the political arena, and purging the officer corps of its worst elements.

The real situation confronting both Cerezo and Azcona is considerably more complex. In both nations the new presidents were far from being the military's choice, yet the armed forces refused to prevent such a result. This was especially notable in Guatemala, where the military's refusal to block the victory of the Christian Democrats contributed to a torrent of attacks on the army from the far right. Like a petulant jilted lover, right-wing politicians suddenly discovered corruption, incompetence, and abuses of power among those officers they had so assiduously courted for the previous years. In Honduras it was the incumbent president who attempted to persuade the military to avert the victory of José Azcona, a member of his own party. The ability of the military to resist such pressures indicates that an intransigent officer corps is by no means the only obstacle to the development of effective democratic governments in Central America.

ECONOMIC DISASTER throughout the region—massive budget deficits, rising unemployment, the debt burden, and a near-total lack of new, private investments—has contributed to a crisis beyond the reach of domestic solutions. Guatemala almost ran out of fuel last fall and was only saved from turning off the lights in the capital by an emergency infusion of U.S. credit. Honduras has become dependent on assistance from Washington to keep its foundering economy from sinking altogether. The armed forces in both countries recognized that only an elected, civilian government could provide access to significant external economic assistance.

Disillusionment with the far right, especially in Guatemala, became increasingly apparent. The right had promised the military that an alliance would produce order, stability, and prosperity. Instead, it had produced conflict, international isolation, and economic collapse. The break in the military's alliance with the far right was a necessary prerequisite to the acceptance of a Christian Democratic victory. It does not, however, mean military support for the Christian Democrats, nor does it end the right's capacity to disrupt the new government's reform programs.

The officers' efforts to maintain power had produced massive domestic as well as international criticism, and had caused increasing dissension within the officer corps. In Guatemala the military wanted out of the direct exercise of political power, and in Honduras the high command was determined not to take on the responsibility for dealing with the chaotic situation left behind by the Suazo administration. Still, the military has not given up real power in either country—only the temporary exercise of some elements of it. Should civilians prove incapable of dealing with the economy, maintaining order, or securing international assistance, the option of a return to the presidential palace is always available. A satirical pamphlet published while Guatemala's Constituent Assembly was drafting that nation's new constitution suggested that an article be included specifying that "civilians would take power whenever the military totally fouled things up, the

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military would take power whenever the civilians totally fouled things up, etc., etc."

IT IS THE WEAKNESS of civilian political sectors, as much as the power of the military, that undermines the prospects for success in Central America's experiment with democracy. In Guatemala the Christian Democrats have never held or even shared power, and virtually none of President Cerezo's cabinet have high-level governmental experience. The party suffered severe losses during the bloody political violence of the past decade, and the available talent is painfully thin. Other moderate civilian parties are in even worse shape. There is no Guatemalan tradition of political compromise, no concept of loyal opposition, no recent experience with governing by law rather than by force. There is not even an effective judiciary. President Cerezo has made improvements in this area one of his highest priorities, but this will put even greater pressures on the already limited human resources available to his administration. The bureaucracy he has inherited is inefficient, riddled with corruption, and not particularly sympathetic to his program. The challenges confronting his administration would be formidable to the most unified and experienced government; under existing conditions they appear almost overwhelming.

Vinicio Cerezo does enjoy some advantages. His party is relatively unified and has an absolute majority in the Congress. As a Christian Democrat he can count on assistance from fellow Christian Democrats in Latin America and Europe. The opposite is true in Honduras, where the Liberal Party is bitterly divided between supporters of the former president and his successor. Even if all the factions were able to work together, they would still be one vote short of an absolute majority in the Congress. Vinicio Cerezo can point to an overwhelming popular mandate in the runoff election for the presidency (over 68 percent of the vote). José Azcona, due to the peculiar Honduran system of holding primary and general elections simultaneously, received only 27 percent of the vote, and one of his opponents received over 40 percent. The weakness of civilian political structures combined with the dominance of personal loyalties and ambitions have given Honduras a minority government that will have difficulty governing effectively.

If Honduras has anything going for it, it is the lack of a serious domestic insurgency, something with which all three of its neighbors must contend. In Guatemala the guerrillas are not as strong as in El Salvador, but they do constitute an ongoing threat to the government and a major obstacle to new investments, especially in such vital areas as petroleum. But an even greater problem may be the heritage of past efforts to crush the insurgents. In the process thousands of innocent Guatemalans, largely Indians, were killed, and many more were uprooted from their homes and forcibly resettled in army-controlled villages. Tens of thousands fled to Mexico, Belize, or Honduras. The image of Guatemala as a nation committing genocide against its own population also contributed to its international isolation, drying up tourism and foreign investment.

THE ABILITY of Guatemala's new administration to overcome this heritage is severely limited. Although the insurgency has slowed considerably since the early 1980s, in recent months it has shown some signs of resurgence. The military remains concentrated in Indian areas, and is fiercely determined to wage the counterinsurgency campaign its own way. It will brook little interference from the capital, and it appears determined to shield its officers from any effort to hold them accountable for past actions. The new administration will be under constant pressure to curb military excesses and purge the officer corps of its worst human rights violators. But efforts in this area could jeopardize its ability to confront other problems, and ultimately could even provoke a military coup. The military would be less reluctant to return to power to defend its own institutional interests than it would be to defend the power of traditional civilian elites. Failure to control the military, however, will seriously handicap efforts to end Guatemala's international isolation. It is in this area, where the dangers are greatest, that President Cerezo's options appear most limited.

Guatemala has better prospects in its dealings with the rest of Central America. Since it has no border with Nicaragua, it is not deeply involved in the anti-Sandinista efforts promoted by the Reagan administration. It is less concerned over a Marxist government in Nicaragua than it is with its unresolved territorial claims against Belize and its traditional distrust of Mexico. Cerezo can promote Central American efforts to resolve their own problems, gaining credibility with Europe in the process, though at the risk of strained ties with Washington. For Honduras, no such options are available. Dependent on U.S. aid, fearful of both Nicaragua and El Salvador, and terrified at the prospect of being left with thousands of armed, unemployable Nicaraguan exiles, it faces a series of cruel options, none of which bodes well for its future. Elections do nothing to solve this dilemma. The vital decisions will be made outside Honduras, and its leaders are in a poor position to influence decision-makers in either Washington or Managua.

A similar problem confronts Guatemala and Honduras as they cope with their economies. Interest rates, IMF policies, and commodity prices are all determined on a global scale, with minimal consideration to the needs or desires of small nations. The recent boost in coffee prices may do more to aid the Guatemalan economy than any decision its government could make. But more basic problems—such as reforming the tax structure, stabilizing the value of the currency, curbing government waste and corruption, and dealing with the problem of agrarian reform—will remain. In both nations, hopes for increased aid from Washington are more likely to be influenced by American concerns over budget deficits than by actions their governments may take. With these nations' destinies so subject to developments beyond their control, the pros-

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pects for effective, democratic governments are severely qualified at best.

The installation of elected civilian governments in Central America is cause for hope, but not necessarily for optimism. President Cerezo's administration offers the potential of a less brutal, more just society. But in his post-election press conference he admitted that his party couldn't offer the social and economic reforms it had advocated a decade earlier "because the political situation has deteriorated since then." "We are realists," he emphasized as he outlined his hopes for dealing with the economy, reviving the courts, and reorganizing the security forces. If the new governments of Guatemala and Honduras prove no more capable than their predecessors of producing a better life for their population, the hopes for a democratic Central America could be replaced by a new cycle of repression and civil conflict.

These governments will need help from the United States in rebuilding their economies, patience in their efforts to construct a more effective and democratic political order, and greater freedom in seeking solutions to regional problems. The national preoccupation with the deficit and the impact of Gramm-Rudman will make it difficult to maintain current levels of assistance to the region, much less to fund any new programs. Many in the administration and in Congress, who are inclined to proclaim a victory for democracy in most of Central America and focus their attention on efforts to isolate and destabilize Nicaragua, ignore the effect such policies will have on the rest of the region. This approach will reduce still further whatever chances these governments have for success. In such a case, the elections, far from being a solution to the region's problems, could become only another element in the destruction of these societies.

RICHARD L. MILLETT

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Political coups at the literary congress.

LEAD ME NOT INTO PEN STATION

BY EDWARD ROTHSTEIN

> If the theme of the Writer's Imagination and the Imagination of the State proves as fertile as we hope, [we will] be able to free ourselves perhaps from a few of the stale perspectives of modern thought in this ninth decade of the technological century.
>
> *—Norman Mailer, president of the 48th International PEN Congress, in the program book.*

BY THE END of the International PEN Congress, which took place in mid-January at the Essex House in New York, Norman Mailer was angry. He was shouting at women who were walking out, regretting that he had not written a more substantial speech, and annoyed that so few of the speakers on the panels had devoted any time to thinking about the congress's theme. Mailer was taking it all quite personally. As president of the American PEN Center, he had spent months helping to organize this first congress in America in 20 years, one of the largest gatherings of literary celebrities in this century—all for this. Susan Sontag, a vice president of the American PEN Center, was calling the meeting a "travesty." And none of the major media reports were inclined to disagree.

Indeed, PEN Congress memorabilia would include little more than high-minded condemnations of tyranny near and far, and self-righteous displays of compassion. Günter Grass, the German novelist, reminded the congress, again and again, of the starving people of the world. Toni Morrison, the commercially and critically acclaimed black American writer, solemnly declared that she could not consider herself American, because the state had always had plans to keep her a slave. Rosario Murillo, a sometime poet and wife of the Nicaraguan president, accused the United States of genocide in Nicaragua. George McGovern, the former presidential candidate, declared his defeat (and Stevenson's and Mondale's) to be signs of the lack of imagination of the American people. And Derek Walcott, the Caribbean-born poet, praised the assembled writers for their courage: "There is no one here who wouldn't endure torture for the sake of truth." The Canadian novelist Robertson Davies, for one, wasn't sure he could keep up with all the indignation and pride: "Is a Canadian a fitting person to speak in such company? What can Canada say to you whose wounds are fresh and bleeding?" Or as Saul Bellow's Herzog might have said, "Lead me not into PEN station."

What could have brought such a distinguished literary gathering to such a level of platitude? How could the

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congress, run by an organization devoted to writers and their liberties, have yielded so few observations of lasting literary value and so many observations of rhetorical and political excess?

Some answers were to be found in the theme of the congress, which set the intellectual premises for the meeting. An exploration of "The Writer's Imagination and the Imagination of the State," the conference proposed an opposition between the two: "The writer possesses or is possessed by an imagination, and life is generated thereby. In the final years of the 20th century, the state possesses an imagination of its own and *something* is generated thereby. It has been widely noted that governments are in important ways impervious to their citizens' control. It is suggested that these two imaginations are in conflict all over the world, and that such conflict is the most important issue facing the writer in the 1980s."

The writer's gift of imagination is thus confronted by a generalized "state" that gives rise to an ominous "something" distinct from the will and control of its citizens. That "something" takes on human form and so may be all the more threatening to writers "all over the world." Mailer's keynote address attempted the first more specific description of that peculiar imagination: "Images of future activities are projected [by the state]; historical desires which require exceptional solutions—as for instance, sending a man to the moon—are undertaken. Mental concepts of the future are formed which are not actually present to the senses—another way of saying that every state has a budget." The imagination of the state, Mailer went on to explain, is not altogether as innocent as moon landings and financial plans. It interferes, it oppresses. Mailer pointed in particular to the "neurotic giants" of the USSR and U.S.—"drunken parents" spawning terrorists.

FACED with such a "something," of course the writer was on his guard, in session after session. "Alienation and the State" questioned whether writers were alienated from the state in new ways, and whether alienation is promoted by that state. "Problems of National Identity" asked whether a writer can compete with the state or even develop a relationship to the social order. "In Opposition" went so far as to ask: "What does it mean to be in opposition, not to this or that state policy or action, but in Kierkegaard's phrase, 'to the whole of existence'?" And crucial to the task of the writer was "The Utopian Imagination." These clichéd themes might seem relatively tame, but their almost invisible presumptions about the imagination of the writer and the nature of the "state" helped lay the ground for what the congress would become.

Problems arose the minute the abstraction of the "state" was made concrete. It was clear the Soviet Union would be of very little interest. It is hardly an interesting act of imagination to claim that this particular state is "impervious to its citizens' control," or that in its dominion writers are faced with certain problems. "Why do you want to speak platitudes?" said Peter Schneider, the West German novelist, when the subject arose. Moreover, the Soviet Union has no PEN chapter, and refused to allow its invited writers to attend, referring to an "atmosphere of hostility." The truly interesting case would be the state where alienation and opposition presumably were more subtle, and villainy less clear.

As soon as the word was out that Secretary of State George Shultz was to deliver a welcoming speech to the congress, America's role as "state" was relatively settled. For Shultz's very presence was taken as an example of the congress's theme: the mandarin of the state meeting a polis of poets. Denounced as a representative of "the most ideologically right-wing administration this country has yet seen" by E. L. Doctorow, Shultz inspired all the opposition the program so abstractly described—including hissing, demonstrative departures from the hall, and cries of angry protest.

Susan Sontag later told me she thought it was the appearance of Shultz that led to the decline of the congress by beginning it as a political event—and reinforcing the PEN board's apparent intention to turn a sober professional meeting into a publicity occasion. But Shultz was just a diversion. In fact, the "something" in question was much bigger than the secretary. The problem was not, as some suggested, that a figurehead of the state should not have been invited to address a writers' meeting. The presidents of Venezuela and Brazil have addressed PEN Congresses, as had Jack Lang, France's culture czar; the director general of UNESCO, Amadou-Mahtar M'Bow, was also speaking that week at a PEN-sponsored press conference. There was even a panel scheduled with politicians in attendance.

Moreover, one of PEN's "guests of honor" was Omar Cabezas, whose position in the Ministry of the Interior in Nicaragua not only makes him a part of the state, but gives him authority over censorship and prisons. (See "A Guerrilla and His Pen," page 29.) Another was Wang Meng, a Chinese writer who is vice chairman of the Writer's Association in China, and a member of the Central Committee of the Communist Party in China—an official representative of the state's view of literature. So the principle of PEN's "independence" from the state was not the issue. It was, instead, that Shultz represented a particular country and a particular set of policies.

THUS, the "something" began to take shape. William Gaddis, for example, attacked American foreign policy, American defense strategy, American religious beliefs. Günter Grass went on to say: "Whoever still believes 'the American way of life' is a viable path to take has to be enough of a hypocrite to be able to ignore the slums on the periphery and the worldwide hunger." From Salman Rushdie's assertion that the United States supports the drug trade in Pakistan, to Ishmael Reed's accusation that America represses "Red English, Brown English, and Yellow English," the congress developed its own ideological core. An entire panel on "Censorship in the USA" turned up what Robert Bernstein of Random House called a "staggering, staggering list" of books in the United States that have been removed from libraries in various commu-

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nities. Grass asked once, perhaps more out of provocation than conviction: "Is capitalism better than gulag communism? I don't think so."

So when Saul Bellow gave an elegant Tocquevillian portrait of the writer's alienation in the United States, all he had to do was mention America's relative success in guaranteeing rights and material welfare to be set upon for his callousness. Grass, Breyten Breytenbach, Allen Ginsberg, Nadine Gordimer, and Rushdie reminded him of America's evils, its exploitations, its South Bronx tenements, and the martyrdom of Nicaraguans. "I started out giving a historical sketch," Bellow replied, "and you are unfortunately stampeding me into political positions." He spoke of the "abandonment of a language of art" in favor of "anchorman jargon and the jargon of 50 to 60 years of radical militancy." In 1948 George Orwell wrote, "To be anti-American nowadays is to shout with the mob." Here those voices could be heard.

BUT if this jargon (and its associated set of ideas) had identified a specific state as villain, it also needed a specific state as hero: on this occasion Nicaragua served the purpose. There the imagination of the (American) state could be seen nefariously at work, strangling a revolution and pushing it into despotism. Omar Cabezas, along with Rosario Murillo of Nicaragua's first family, held court at a table in Rumpelmayers at the St. Moritz between sessions. In his public talk Cabezas presented Nicaraguan writers' demands for "our right to love . . . and create." "We too," he said, "want to be the land of opportunity." Hans Christoph Buch, the chairman of a session on national identity, took the liberty of reading out loud a petition against U.S. policy in Nicaragua, footnoting it with his own vocal support. On the final day Norman Mailer read it again, intoning each of the 149 signers' names.

As for the suspension of civil liberties and the Sandinistas' long-standing notions of Marxist-Leninist revolution on the Cuban model, as for the steady stifling of dissent and suppression of those democratic forces that helped the Sandinistas overthrow Somoza, as for the curbs on unions and repression of the Church, the forced migrations and killings of the Miskito Indians—all such matters were glossed over. "Nicaragua is so beautiful," Cabezas proclaimed, its problems so callously caused by the United States.

PEN's proclaimed "nonpolitical" pose was belied not just by the writers themselves, but by the remarkable confluence of points of view in the statesmen invited to the final session—Pierre Trudeau, George McGovern, and Bruno Kreisky. Arthur Schlesinger, chairing the session, praised McGovern for fighting overseas during World War II while Reagan was in Hollywood, and proclaimed that Kreisky, the former chancellor of Austria, must be listened to if we want peace in the Middle East. Kreisky went so far as to call for accommodation to all terrorists' demands for recognition, and said of Qaddafi: "He is a revolutionary, I am evolutionary."

And so the presumptive political lines of the congress were drawn, again and again marking out the boundaries of what might be called the international counterculture. The volume of assumption, the absence of genuine argument, the indifference to other positions, as though only these positions were appropriate for a nonpartisan, nonpolitical congress, were stunning. Would any speaker have dared to praise Reagan as Schlesinger and Gaddis and numerous others condemned him? Would any panel speaker have openly condemned the left as consistently as its positions were praised? The congress as a whole was not simply a literary congress, or a literary congress gone political. On display were the manners of contemporary literary culture. If the congress was a "travesty," it was because it simply displayed with full force its own hidden presumptions.

YET those presumptions didn't hold sway entirely unchallenged. There was a dissenting sensibility at the congress, which attacked the ideas found even in the phrasing of the questions. It became clear from the audience's enthusiastic response to these attacks that the underlying premise of the congress was wrong. It was not possible simply to assume that there was a link between literature and left-wing political views that cast the writer as crusader against the undifferentiated powers of the state.

Amos Oz, for example, challenged the very posing of the theme, with its reference to the "state." Calling for a particularity, rather than a grandeur, of vision, he made the simplest of proclamations—that there are degrees of evil, that the writer bears responsibility for making distinctions. (See "A Writer's Guide," page 28.) When he finished there was a sustained outburst of applause, enthusiasm, and relief. Similarly when Mario Vargas Llosa resisted idealizing the writer, took the need for the state seriously, called democracy a "mediocre" system but a necessary one, and attacked, passionately, antidemocratic sensibilities in fellow Latin American writers, the sustained ovation was an expression of a public voice freed from tactful silence.

But that silence was one of the largely unremarked provocations of the congress. Even the petition against United States policy in Nicaragua, the most circulated and publicized document at the congress, could get only 149 signatures out of the 700 or so in attendance. This was unrecognized dissent, the voice of writers choosing solitude and silence over public poses, whether they agreed or not.

In the echoes of the silence could be heard how little Grass and Hans-Magnus Enzensberger and Morrison and Rushdie and Schneider and Vonnegut and Doctorow and Paley were really saying and how unconvincing they were. What they were after was a kind of gesture, a demonstration of something far different from the mundane attention to detail and circumstance that ordinarily makes for politics—or literature.

The nuances of such dissent were neglected from the start by the organizers of the program, celebrated writers from the United States and their Western colleagues, who

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may have felt not a little envy of those who had suffered under true tyrannies. After all, the organizers came from precisely those countries where the state is most open to transformation, and where the role of the writer is of least significance. Meanwhile, Eastern European writers, such as Czeslaw Milosz, or Soviet émigrés, such as Vasily Aksyonov, were from countries where such questions have life-and-death significance and where the role of the writer is of immense importance. As Philip Roth once put it, here "everything goes and nothing matters" while there "nothing goes and everything matters."

The writers of the Western democracies, feeling history passing them by, seemed to have based the entire congress on an attempt to claim for themselves the themes, urgency, moral stance, and significance that their colleagues from the East have no need to strain for. In his quest for seriousness, for example, Doctorow invoked *Slaughterhouse Five* and *Catch-22* as novels that have saved lives by influencing the antiwar movement.

THE RESULT was not an active engagement with the social world and the powers within it, but a metaphysical claim on historical urgency. It is perhaps the manufactured sense of exclusion, of living "unheard" in democratic culture, that causes so many of these writers to demand almost religious salvation in politics, which becomes a quest for utopian solutions. The utopian temptation of course may well be there for every writer. Utopia, which means "no place," is bound to the world of fiction. An act of imagination is almost by definition utopian; it is only in the imagination that utopia can exist.

Yet writers aren't equally susceptible to the utopian temptation. It took a Central European, Milosz, to articulate the problem both critically and clearly. Grass got up at one point during the congress, dismayed that it was necessary in a discussion of failed utopias to repeatedly mention the Soviet Union, and asked why more attention wasn't paid to the failure of capitalist utopia. Milosz pointed out that it was simply incorrect to talk about the utopian vision of capitalism: "Capitalism was a natural growth of life . . . there is a *Natura devorans* and a *Natura devorata*: a Nature that devours and a Nature devoured. This is just the opposite of utopia." Whereas the utopianism of the totalitarian governments of the East seems to create writers who are adamantly anti-utopian, the non-utopian traditions of capitalism and democracy have produced writers almost painfully vulnerable to utopian fantasy about mankind as well as about states.

When such writers take to the moral and political soapbox, as so many did at PEN, the utopian imagination comes to the fore, freed from the demands of reality. Faced with the world of the Western democracies—which are non-utopian—these native dreamers become restless, distressed. Tocqueville describes the "heterogeneous stirring crowd" of the democratic state, a "motley multitude with intellectual wants to be supplied" but lacking in traditions and common habits. This atmosphere poses a problem to the writer. Henry James complained again and again in *The American Scene* of the "thinness" of American life. The writer may feel alienated from the democratic scene; as Bellow argued in his talk, the presence of rights and riches do not guarantee a heritage of high culture that gives a home to the serious writer. The writer may well take his convictions elsewhere.

He may take them, more specifically, to the Third World, whose citizens, like bourgeois arrivistes in the 19th century, yearn for something more than their past. In the Third World, as in Eastern Europe, history is not trivial, but urgent. For what is found in such places as Nicaragua—for the writer in particular—is the illusion that history is literally being written, that a grand experiment of the imagination is taking place with the biggest themes and biggest subjects, beside which daily life in the capitals of the West seems trivial indeed. Here—as was once believed of Russia, China, Cuba, Vietnam, and Cambodia—is Revolution, History, People, Destiny—a state coming to be born with its own fervent imagination, with many plans for what can be made of man and society. Right now such offerings are made almost exclusively by aspiring regimes of the so-called left, though earlier in this century the appeal of Fascism was tempting for the same reason.

Unfortunately, the flights of writers' fantasies have implications. As Vargas Llosa said: "Very great writers can be totally blind in political matters and put all their prestige and imagination at the service of something which one day may destroy what they do." We do not have to look too far in the past to stumble on the false wisdom of a Gide or a Céline. In fact, if the history of political judgments by writers should teach writers anything, it is humility.

THE CONGRESS demonstrated yet again how stupid our most talented writers can be about history and politics—and how unreliable that faculty of the imagination really is for intellectual comprehension. The imagination believes so strongly in its own utopian powers to remake and reconstruct that the hard material edges of experience seem to give way before it. The novel, by nature of its artfulness, allows the imagination literal reign. Art may be a noble lie or an ignoble one—but it grants its creator no authority on the truth.

We may be thankful after the PEN Congress that our writers are not the legislators, acknowledged or unacknowledged, of the world. But they do contribute to its debased political discourse—and they do, as Shelley noted, reflect the world, even if they understand it not. After hearing the proclamations of PEN, the solemn pieties and genuflection, the staged compassion, the broad-stroked imaginings of a way station to utopia, Shelley's words have heavily ironic implications: "It is impossible," he wrote, "to read the compositions of the most celebrated writers of the present day without being startled with the electric life which burns within their words. They measure the circumference and sound the depths of human nature with a comprehensive and all-penetrating spirit." Perhaps he didn't actually have to listen to them speak. □

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STANLEY KAUFFMANN ON FILMS

The Old Order Changeth Not

A new film reminded me obliquely of a book published last year to which I owe attention. I'll get to the film later; the book is *The Classical Hollywood Cinema: Film Style and Mode of Production to 1960* by David Bordwell, Janet Staiger, and Kristin Thompson (Columbia University Press, $49.50). Each of the authors contributed sections; Bordwell and Staiger also collaborated on some chapters. It's a huge book—506 large-size, double-columned pages, helpfully illustrated—and if it has an overall fault, it's that the authors' theses are expounded rather too generously. But those theses are well worth exploration.

Down and Out in Beverly Hills
(Buena Vista)

The authors use the term "classical" in a way familiar to film discourse. They accept André Bazin's dictum that by 1939—in fact, they think it was true earlier—Hollywood filmmaking had acquired "all the characteristics of a classical art." Decorum, proportion, formal harmony, respect for tradition, mimesis, self-effacing craftsmanship, and cool control of the perceiver's response are the traditional criteria they use, and they never confuse the criteria with the aesthetic level of the material to which the criteria are applied.

The book points out that, within this style, there is variety:

> Classical filmmaking is not, strictly speaking, formulaic: there is always another way to do something. You can light a scene high- or low-key, you can pan or track, you can cut rapidly or seldom. A group style thus establishes what semiologists call a paradigm. . . . At the same time, the style remains a unified system because the paradigm offers *bounded* alternatives.

No classical film, whatever its choices, would use the low-key lighting that sometimes occurs in Godard or the cut-a-second technique of some avant-garde work.

This classicism, the authors show, is aesthetically founded on clarity and causality. From that ground it's a short step to see that the style is also founded on general social and moral acceptances. But what differentiates Hollywood classicism from classicism generally is that it has a second source and governance. The authors relate Hollywood classicism to Hollywood industrial conditions. They subscribe, with patent aptness in this case, to the familiar Marx-Engels dictum: a society's culture is rooted in its modes of production.

> The classical style can be linked to its conditions of production much more precisely than is generally acknowledged. . . . Stylistic continuity has depended upon a "continuity" script and a "continuity girl." The division of the film into shots and scenes bears the traces of divisions within the labor process. The repetition of camera set-ups so important for classical spatial orientation also mirrors a rapid, economical production procedure that depends upon shooting "out of continuity." Soft-focus backgrounds in medium shots can save money in set construction. . . . [The montage sequence] not only fulfilled stylistic functions; it had the virtue of economy. . . . The film industry built the montage sequence into its production practices.

Numerous other stylistic practices are related to studio economics in this book "devoted to showing how the classical mode of filmic *representation* both sustained and was sustained by the development of a specific mode of film *production*."

Out of all its detail and explication, the book makes for me a monolithic point. By 1920 the Hollywood classical style had become the film world's standard. Every so-called Western country that made films, and some non-Western countries, took that style as its model or else consciously rejected it. To most non-Western cultures the style was, for one reason or another, extraneous. But elsewhere in the world, everyone now makes either films in Hollywood classical style or films that are deliberately anti-Hollywood.

The authors' chief category for the non-Hollywood film in the Western world is the "art cinema," a debatable term but a handy tool. They see in the art cinema a lesser concern with cogent causality, a greater concern with "the nature and sources of psychological states. The art cinema is concerned less with action than reaction; it is a cinema of psychological effects in search of their causes." (*Persona*, *L'Avventura*, and *Breathless* are three of their examples.) In its last section the book describes the New Hollywood, post 1960, which "has absorbed several conventions of the [art cinema]." (Among the examples are the flashbacks in *The Pawnbroker*.)

> Certain technical tics of the art cinema have proven easy to assimilate. . . . Yet two factors keep the New Hollywood from becoming only a pastiche of the continental art cinema. First, there is the almost complete conservatism of style. . . .

FILMS WORTH SEEING

Out of Africa. A wobbly adaptation of Isak Dinesen's book (and complementary material), but worth every minute because it gives Meryl Streep a locus for her magnificent performance as Karen Blixen. (Reviewed 1/20/86)

Ran. For people who revere Akira Kurosawa, it is unthinkable to miss his version of *King Lear*. (*Ran* means "chaos.") Not his top-rank work, still it's direction by a master. (1/6&13/86)

Shoah. Hebrew for "holocaust." Claude Lanzmann's nine-and-a-half-hour documentary—all filmed since 1976—is a massive memorial: testimony by survivors of the Final Solution, witnesses, and participants. A monument. (10/28/85)

Young Sherlock Holmes. Produced by Steven Spielberg, these capers of the schoolboy Holmes and Watson are never credible and almost always amusing. (12/30/85)

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> Second, even the most ambitious directors cannot escape genres. . . . Classical film style and codified genres swallow up art-film borrowings. . . .

THESE comments came to mind while I was watching a recent attempt by the New Hollywood to ingest an art film, Paul Mazursky's *Down and Out in Beverly Hills*.

In 1932 Jean Renoir adapted René Fauchois's boulevard comedy *Boudu Saved from Drowning* for the screen. The film was made for and with Michel Simon, who had played the role on the stage, but Renoir decisively changed the ending. In the play, a kindly Parisian bookseller takes into his home a tramp, Boudu, who has tried to drown himself. The benefactor finds out that he has befriended a disrupter and seducer, but Boudu ends up reformed. For his film, Renoir insisted that Boudu remain unreformed: at the moment of marriage to the housemaid whom he has seduced, Boudu rids himself of obligations and possessions and flees to resume his unconfined life.

Mazursky, with the aid of Leon Capetanos, has adapted the Fauchois play to Beverly Hills today and has kept the Fauchois ending. Jerry, the Boudu character, ultimately returns to the bosom of the family that befriended him and, presumably, to at least one of the bosoms in that family. So the power of genre reaches in and wipes away the Renoir ending. A film about irrepressible independence, about a bearded Pan, is converted into one more cute stranger-in-the-house comedy, *My Man Godfrey* up-to-date—about a savior in rags who improves everyone including himself. All the hip decor—the gross partying, the son's homosexuality—doesn't conceal the subversion of a true work of art cinema. The film is faithful to Fauchois, who was the boulevard equivalent of a Hollywood classicist, but Mazursky would never have touched the play if Renoir hadn't made it famous in an improved state, now discarded.

As for the first factor above, style, Mazursky hardly tries for any of the "technical tics." It's almost all old Hollywood. The comedy editing is straight Abbott and Costello. The effects are venerable Hollywood standbys. (When the lady of the house achieves orgasm in Jerry's embrace—her first in nine-and-a-half years—the lawn sprinklers go off.)

Still, Mazursky shows himself a gift-

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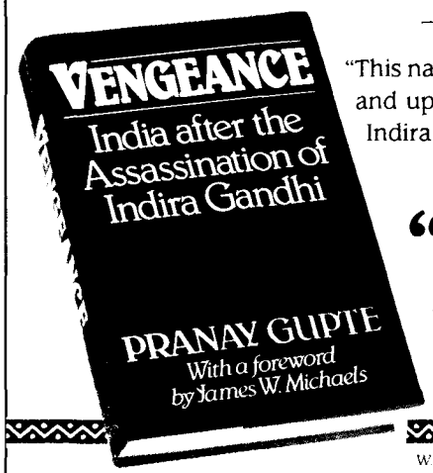

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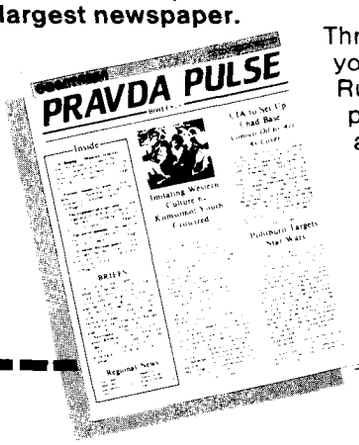

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ed director of dogs. When Jerry is taken into the house and asked to strip so that he can be cleaned up, the family dog covers his eyes with his paws. When Jerry takes Madame to bed, the dog, on the boudoir rug, rolls over on his back in awe.

Whether or not one entirely agrees (I don't) with the book's assertions about the New Hollywood, Mazursky's film almost seems planned to prove them right.

Günter Grass visits the South Bronx.

A Fable

By Leon Wieseltier

WHEN Saul Bellow praised the United States at the PEN Congress for having made its citizens physically and materially secure, thereby freeing them for their spiritual and cultural development, Günter Grass rose to remind him that American society was imperfect. Perhaps he meant to say only that there is poverty in America, though Bellow did not mean to deny it; but Grass thought that it sufficed to prove his point to adduce a visit to the South Bronx he had made three years earlier.

Some of those in attendance groaned at still another literary instance of moral tourism. (In recent years Grass has become one of the most gifted moral tourists of all, having found Poland in Nicaragua and Nicaragua in Poland.) But they could not have known that at PEN Grass was acting honorably, that he was keeping a promise made late on a drizzly afternoon, in a landscape of indescribable desolation, with one of the most hopeless people in America. My friend Zeitblom, who works at the Goethe House in New York, was Grass's companion on that tour. Offended by the rough manner in which the conservatives and anticommunists and chauvinists and cold warriors of the American media have treated the man into whose hands German language and literature have fallen for safekeeping, Zeitblom has agreed to tell the story.

The irony of a Goethe-sponsored trip to Charlotte Street was not lost on Grass. Zeitblom made much of it in the cab on FDR Drive. They talked of Werther and Wilhelm, of the centuries of young German men of sensibility for whom Charlotte was the very name of first love. It was appalling, and also a little thrilling, to contain within a single consciousness the harmony of the 18th century and the horror of their destination that day. They agreed that the cab was transporting them across whole cultures, into a new zone of thought and feeling that only $1.75 at the Triboro Bridge and largeness of soul qualified them to enter.

"From *Bildungsroman* to Buildings-*roman*," Zeitblom lamely proposed. But Grass was swiftly moving beyond the contradictions. He was beginning to think that it would not be long before he would discover similarities in the differences. It had happened to him elsewhere, in more foreign parts, the sudden melting away of foreignness and the sudden rush of comprehension. Man is stupid everywhere. And what the mind might fail to grasp, the imagination would.

They arrived, and Grass was struck by the sight of the ruins. He told Zeitblom that it was 40 years since he had seen so many burned and gutted structures. This time America was making war on itself, he reflected; and he considered the meaning of a system of aggression so perfect that bombing from the air was made obsolete by the willingness of men and women to destroy their cities themselves.

The presence of the police at almost all the corners of Charlotte Street confirmed the beginnings of an analysis. He wondered whether these minions of the state were there less to protect the citizens of the South Bronx than to protect the rest of the city from the citizens of the South Bronx. Then Grass observed the Potemkin flowerpots that the authorities had painted and posted over the wounds in the facades that used to be windows. By now he had the sensation of being in the presence of a logic.

Zeitblom was rather swiftly sickened by what he saw, but Grass was warming to the challenge of the phenomena. He saw rats, which for him had always been a mark of authenticity. The people of Charlotte Street confirmed the meaning of the rats. They were Grass's kind of people: bawdy, almost Swabian. Despite his excellent command of English, Grass could not understand a word they said. Still, the obscurity of their speech commended it. He recognized that it was the natural antithesis of the sanitized speech of power, an angry retort to the corporate juggernaut. In every sound without sense Grass heard a kind of stammering of truth, another of those raw regional modifications of language that conceal the most profound mysteries.

Grass was struck by the contrast between the desolation of the place and its noise. The volume itself was proof of unvanquished life. Observing the fierce physical response of the young blacks to the rhythms of their portable tape players—"ghetto blasters," he'd heard them called: would that it were so!—Grass thought ruefully that it was one of these that he would have to place in the hands of Oskar Matzerath, were he to create him now. Grass wanted to mingle with the peasants and the workers, though Zeitblom, who had been living in New York for six years, warned him that there was danger. He wanted to touch, to smell, to taste, all the great American negations around him. Above all, perhaps, to taste; to penetrate into the very pantry of the American underclass.

Zeitblom recalls the people along Charlotte Street staring quizzically at Grass, who seemed to be treating them like celebrities. When the writer approached a young man too closely, for the purpose of studying the symbols that hung from a heavy gold chain around his neck and fell upon the fine muscles of his chest, Zeitblom sensed trouble. The young man was provoked. He shouted something at Grass, who backed off wisely.

It pained Zeitblom to hear the heir of Thomas Mann referred to as a "motherfucker." Grass, however, accepted the compliment. He felt that he had been

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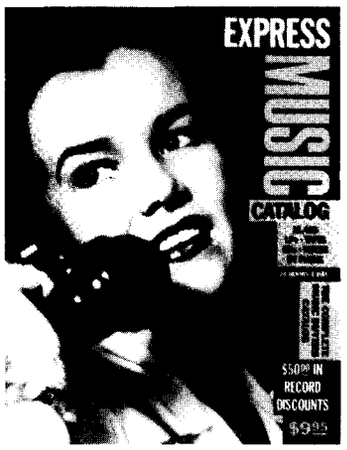

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A WRITER'S GUIDE

The state has no imagination. "The imagination of the state" exists only in the imagination of some writers, like those who invented the title of this congress. St. George and the Dragon—something like that must have been on their minds when they contrived this title. Every writer an empty-handed Solzhenitsyn, every dragon a wicked Brezhnev or a vicious Richard Nixon. I don't like it. I think some states are relatively decent. So are some writers. And some states and some writers are corrupt in many different ways. Our title has about it a ring of romantic anarchism. I reject the image of a saintly lot of writers marching fearlessly to combat heartless bureaucracies on behalf of all the sweet and simple human beings out there. I am not in the business of the beauties versus the beasts.

For one thing, states and governments and bureaucracies—the fair ones *and* the hideous ones, there are both—have always been inspired by all sorts of visions generating from all kinds of writers. Some of these visions are fair, some are bad, some are hideous—visions that various rulers have or have not distorted in ways that different writers have condemned or praised.

For another, some writers have indeed died in jails and gulags while some others have thrived in courts and dachas. But most have neither died in martyrdom nor thrived by licking boots. None of us has ever killed a dragon. Moreover, the sweet and simple common people out there are neither sweet nor simple. We know, most of us, better than that. Just read our own books and see.

Again and again I am amazed by the gulf between what writers see when we write our poems, stories, plays—and what we do when we formulate or sign our petitions, manifestos, titles for panel discussions. It is as if we were using two contradictory pairs of eyes. Present company not excluded. Myself not excluded. Most of us know a thing or two about the dragons inside the human heart. Yet outside our literary works we often tend to sound as if we believe in the simplistic, dangerous, Rousseauian assumption that governments and establishments are wicked—all of them—whereas common people are born pure and sweet in heart—all of them.

I beg to differ. The state is a necessary evil simply because many individuals are themselves very capable of being very evil. Moreover, there are differences among states. Some are almost fair, some are bad, some are lethal. And since writers are, or at least they ought to be, in the subtleties department and in the precision department, it is our job to differentiate. Whoever ignores the existence of varying degrees of evil is bound to become a servant of evil.

Precision and subtleties—we are not reporters, and yet we are. We do not necessarily collect or reflect facts—we invent, we twist, we exaggerate, we distort. We turn things inside out and upside down. But note: the moment we put things into words, our words are promoted into evidence. Hence our responsibility for precision, for nuances, for subtleties. Hence our duty to map evil, to grade it, to measure its degrees.

The tragedy of history is not the perpetual hopeless clash between saintly individuals and diabolical establishments. It is rather the perpetual clash between the relatively decent societies and the bloody ones. To be more precise: the perpetual cowardice of relatively decent societies whenever they confront the ruthlessness of oppressive ones.

How can one be humane, which means skeptical and capable of moral ambivalence, and at the same time try to combat evil? How can one stand fanatically against fanaticism? How can one fight without becoming a fighter? How can one struggle against evil without catching it? And deal with history without becoming exposed to the poisonous effect of history? Three months ago, in Vienna, I saw a street demonstration of environmentalists protesting against scientific experiments on guinea pigs. They carried placards with images of Jesus Christ surrounded by suffering guinea pigs. The inscription read: "He loved them too." Maybe he did, but some of the protesters looked to me as if eventually they may not be above shooting hostages in order to bring an end to the sufferings of the guinea pigs. Which is, to some extent, the story of do-gooders here and there, and maybe everywhere.

Let us not ascribe a demonic imagination to the state and a redeeming imagination to ourselves. Let us not give in to the temptation of simplification. We ought to be telling the bad from the worse from the worst.

AMOS OZ

Amos Oz is the author most recently of *A Perfect Peace* (Harcourt Brace Jovanovich).

addressed as an equal. Moreover, he had always thought of himself a little like that. *Ein geistlicher* motherfucker: an exciting literary concept, and the perfect name for his ambition. Maybe there was an essay in it.

But Grass understood that he had a problem. Here he was, at last, in the South Bronx, one of capitalism's cruelest failures, and his heart was not broken. He was stimulated, rather; he would return from his few hours on Charlotte Street (the cab had been prudently asked to wait) with material, with fresh ideas about the relationship between suffering and ribaldry. But it was even worse than that. Grass grasped that in truth he was beholden to the misery of these people. The young man with the gold chain would never understand it, but he and all the other hard and harassed people on the sidewalks and the stoops had made Grass the gift of a complication in the great debate about East and West. Without the evidence of disfigured Americans, he might have had to accede to the historical opinions of those for whom he had no political or cultural respect, to accede to some form of Americanism. He was honest enough to acknowledge that the South Bronx was finally—convenient.

Zeitblom tried to picture the anguish of the German writer who discovered that he had a use for evil. Zeitblom was reminded of Goethe again, and of Mann again; he wondered if he was not in the company of German literature's newest holy sinner. He tried to console Grass for the impossibility of his position by mumbling something about a great tradition, but Grass would have none of it. He had no time for Zeitblom's sentimentality.

Instead Grass would boldly seize the coincidence of his and the South Bronx's interests. If proof had been

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found for his prejudice, then all power to his prejudice! A thing need not be false for being useful, he added. He resolved that he would repay his debt to the South Bronx precisely by being indefatigable in his use of it.

Grass strode back up the block to the young man and made a promise: wherever he appeared, at congresses and cocktail parties and press conferences and party meetings, in novels and stories and poems and essays and film scripts, he would recount the young man's hardships. The writer would insist, to the full limit of his influence, that America be known by *him*. It is the only way a writer has to show his thanks.

For the second time the young man was perplexed by the motherfucker with the crazy mustache, and wondered if he was a cop. Zeitblom admired the nobility of the writer, who would rather have made an ordinary bargain with a man than a tragic bargain with the devil. And Grass hoped that one day the South Bronx might learn of his efforts on its behalf. Three years later, when Bellow seemed to imply that there were no exceptions to American prosperity, Grass was ready. A few sentences at the microphone, another portion of his debt defrayed. When he saw his sentences in the next morning's *New York Times*, according to Zeitblom, he was particularly pleased. The South Bronx might see them, too.

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POLITICS IN ENGLAND

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The Nicaraguan revolution's classic.

A GUERRILLA AND HIS PEN

BY XAVIER ARGUELLO

NO BOOK in the history of revolutionary Nicaragua has sold more copies than the combat memoirs of Omar Cabezas, the 34-year-old *comandante* of the Sandinista army and at present the country's vice minister of the interior. The initial press run of 10,000 copies was exhausted in a matter of weeks. The Sandinista Front thereafter disseminated it in the form of a radio drama, broadcast over the country's sole national network. The book has enjoyed a similar success in other places—Mexico, Cuba, Peru. It is even reported that a copy was found on the body of a Maoist guerrilla of the Sendero Luminoso ("Shining Path") movement in Peru, after a fatal encounter with the local police in the frigid peaks of the Andes.

Fire from the Mountain has also been received with unhesitating warmth by some of the most important Latin American writers. One need only read Carlos Fuentes's extraordinary introduction to this American edition. Fuentes is reminded of Proust, Stendhal, Balzac, Thackeray, Dostoyevsky, Kafka, Beckett, Defoe, Stephen Crane, and Mark Twain, and concludes that this work of "tender violence" is "a feat of the Spanish language and the Hispanic imagination." In Nicaragua itself, the local intellectuals have hailed it as "the literary precursor of a national revolutionary language," comparing it to the *Canterbury Tales* or the *Poema del mio Cid*. Even the Argentine novelist Julio Cortázar, on a final visit to Nicaragua before his death, joined the droves of writers favorably impressed by the narrative virtues of the book.

Fire from the Mountain:
The Making of a Sandinista
by Omar Cabezas
translated by Kathleen Weaver
(Crown Publishers, 233 pp., $13.95)

In the United States Cabezas's reception has been no less enthusiastic. Some

Xavier Arguello was a columnist for *La Prensa* in Managua from 1977 to 1979, and a political organizer in the anti-Somoza resistance. From July 1979 to January 1980 he was general secretary of the Nicaraguan Ministry of Culture. In 1980 he became editor of *Nicaraguac*, the official cultural journal of the Sandinista regime. He resigned in protest against official censorship in 1984. He now lives in San José, Costa Rica.

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have found in his book irrefutable proof of the force of Sandinista convictions, and therefore of the apparent invincibility of these men of iron character and will. Others, rather more appropriately, have chosen to dwell upon its merits as an adventure story—and, truth to tell, it is difficult to put down. At the recent PEN Congress in New York, where Cabezas was a "guest of honor," Norman Mailer called his book "fabulous."

What has been missing from all this enthusiasm, however, is any acknowledgment that *Fire from the Mountain* is primarily not a literary work or an adventure story at all. It is, rather, a political instrument placed (like any other art form) at the service of a cause. The revolution has richly exploited the celebrity gained by the book. Omar Cabezas has replaced Ernesto Cardenal as its literary ambassador. And he was recently named the chief of the Office of National Security, replacing a bloodthirsty psychopath who had run amok. Cabezas's presence will signify nothing more than a cosmetic change, however, in the National Secret Service, which is of Cuban design and advice. And it is unlikely that he will someday rebel to devote himself to his literary work. His loyalty is to the process, not to literature.

I WAS PRESENT at the creation of this book. I was working as editor of the review *Nicaraguac*, published by the Ministry of Culture of the Revolutionary Government. Minister Ernesto Cardenal, then my superior, suggested that I visit Cabezas to request the first chapters of the memoir we knew him to be dictating. He had read them aloud at a private party the night before, to the delight of all those present. Omar had been recently elevated to chief of the Council of Higher Education, a sort of chancellor of the country's entire university system. This was an impressive post for someone so young and with such scant academic credentials, offset only (but probably, in this case, decisively) by his greater experience as a student agitator.

To gain access to Omar, I enlisted the aid of a Sandinista militant before whose party card (it was of truly impressive antiquity) all obstacles collapsed. We learned that Omar was reluctant to publish his chapters in *Nicaraguac* for fear of disqualifying them from the annual competition in narrative prose conducted by the Cuban cultural agency, Casa de las Americas, one of whose conditions was that the entry be wholly unpublished. Cabezas picked up the phone and called the writer Sergio Ramirez, then serving as vice president of the governing junta; Ramirez, intimately familiar with the political considerations that determine the outcome of Cuban literary contests, assured him that there was no power on earth that could deprive him of the honor he sought. When these first chapters appeared in *Nicaraguac*—having been poured forth into his tape recorder "between nights of lovemaking" and drafts of wine (by then Omar's taste was too refined for rum)—they aroused an enthusiastic response. When the book was published (and won, quite properly, the Cuban prize), my name figured among those to whom it was dedicated.

FIRE FROM THE MOUNTAIN is an account of the intimate details of clandestine revolutionary activity told from the point of view of a participant. With a sense of humor all his own, and at times a distinctly poetic quality, Cabezas portrays the Sandinista forces very much as they really were in their early years, during their long physical and emotional struggle to survive as a small guerrilla army in the northern mountains of Somoza's Nicaragua. Cabezas tears away the mystery that surrounds the previous lives of the Sandinista heroes who today dominate the headlines, smoking large Cuban cigars in the coziness of their ministerial suites. In these pages they are a handful of partisans who think and act much like any poor lad in the slums of Caracas or in the outlying districts of Mexico City—hating the rich, falling in and out of love, masturbating behind the bushes, aspiring above all to enjoy the white, fragrant flesh of a girl of the highest social class.

The first chapters are set in León, a community of 90,000 people some 60 miles from the heart of Nicaragua's cotton-growing region, where Omar lived as an adolescent. Cabezas's evocation of his native town is particularly vivid—the heat of Holy Week, the atmosphere of noise and sweat in the billiard parlor that serves as his refuge, the park that stands as a sylvan relief from the boiling asphalt of the city center. The rich, of course, dwell in a world apart, reclusive behind the forbidding walls of the Society Club. Boys in expensive imported cars lurk at the gates of the Catholic girls' schools. Young ladies of quality, home on vacation from their studies in the United States, sunbathe at the Poneloya Beach. They take no notice of the young man with feverish eyes—thin and disheveled, the product of a poor and broken home—who observes them from a table at a cheap hotel facing the sea.

> . . . they were really good looking. They came in shorts—white shorts, blue shorts, red shorts; in blue jeans cut right up to their crotch—that's what really got to me, even more when they turned around and I got a juicy rear view. They had long hair; short hair; they were brown or they were white. . . . Some were pink, pinkish, burned to a crisp. . . . El Gato Mungia [one of Cabezas's friends] used to say, "Tan all over—except for where the bottom of their bikini was. That'll be whiter." Then he would add, "All the better—an easier target!"

Years later the Sandinistas would turn many of those boys into their servants, and in some cases the girls into their paramours. The revolution, after all, has torn the lid off of Nicaragua's traditional society.

CABEZAS'S decision to join the Sandinista Front was provoked more by his esteem for a friend who recruited him than by political conviction. "I thought Juan José was such a great guy, how could he be mixed up in all that? But then it hit me: hell, if Juan José *was* involved, that meant the people he was working for couldn't be half bad. . . !" In those days the members of the Sandinista Front could be counted on the fingers of one hand. But then, as now, their high degree of organization, and the exaggerations of the media, helped them to appear more numerous, active, and belligerent than they really were:

> . . . none of the comrades was privy to all of the secrets of the organization, and the name—Sandinista Front—sounded so impressive . . . and then, there were the posters on the street, on the walls; kidnappings and bank robberies which caused the entire country to remain glued to the radio for days at a time awaiting the latest flash; the deployment of propaganda disguised as information; all of this led us to see ourselves as we were reflected in the fun-house mirror of publicity. That was what was great about it!

The Sandinista Front gave to Omar's feeling of social deprivation a political content. Behind his revolutionary persona there lay a sense of thwarted indi-

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vidualism, and the worst form of loneliness—ideological hunger. He masked both with a sense of solidarity, and the huge personal satisfaction of belonging, ". . . in secret, to the most secret of secrets, to the revolutionary vanguard." The FSLN gave his life meaning, much in the way that many young men of similarly humble origins had found an identity by joining the National Guard, remaining loyal to Somoza until the very end. During these last years of the old regime, the groundwork was being laid for a war between two institutions almost identical in their social composition and in the role they played in the lives of their members. The country was simply too small to harbor both for an indefinite period.

LEONEL RUGAMA was Cabezas's first political tutor. A talented ex-seminarian, a mathematician of great talent, and a precocious poet, he haunted the streets of pre-earthquake Managua with a Bible in his pocket and a pistol concealed in a newspaper. The Bible was no mere source of spiritual counsel; he had vociferously underlined all the passages critical of the rich. His glance was a rare combination of mysticism and hatred. "I remember him in avid discussion with a group of friends, arching his brow, repeating, 'We have to be like Ché . . . like Ché . . . like Ché. . . .' " Most of the rest of us spent our afternoons hanging around a coffee shop called "La India," still completely absorbed in breaking the placenta of our puberty.

Cabezas recalls with evident nostalgia the political agitation conducted by the student arm of the Sandinista Front. "At the time, I think, we embodied youth in its noblest expression. I don't know quite why . . . but today students don't seem the same. They aren't like before; they aren't like us; they lack style and substance—yes, those are the two things they lack. . . ." True enough. They lack the innocence of young people free of other responsibilities, able to dream and imagine their own solutions to the country's problems. Instead, they are subjected to massive political indoctrination, and forced to bear the heavy burden of a false historical responsibility. No smiles, no jokes, and no freedom to think, either.

During Cabezas's university days, campus political leaders supervised the activity of the other students like foremen on a ranch. Many of those young people whose parents had warned them not to get involved in politics ("it leads only to jail or to tarnished reputations") had no clear idea of the cause for which they worked. They killed time and fought boredom, squatting on the floor hand-painting posters until they were exhausted. The majority lost interest early, and abandoned the cause without ever returning. Others were wafted away by more interesting diversions—the theater or cinema clubs. The luckiest fell in love and dropped politics for personal involvement. Though they, too, opposed the dictatorship, the Sandinistas did not appear to them a serious alternative.

In those years (the prehistoric epoch of Sandinismo, we might say) the primary responsibility of the organization was in the hands of Efraín Sánchez Sancho, "a character utterly lacking both moral solvency and serious political talent." Whether or not Cabezas's harsh judgment is correct, the fact remains that one had to be a hopeless failure in one's studies or irretrievably wild to risk one's personal security under the circumstances. Omar recognizes that to join the Front in those days was like embarking "upon an enterprise with no future . . ." (which amounts to saying that those who accepted the challenge and survived are entitled to exact the compensation of a luxurious life-style today).

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HOW PEACE CAME TO THE WORLD

edited by Earl W. Foell and Richard A. Nenneman
Foreword by Kurt Waldheim

It can happen. In the year 2010 the world is at peace and the threat of nuclear devastation has vanished. How did this come about? Through the imaginative ideas of forty men and women—lawyers, doctors, professors, conflict research specialists, and others who think about peace in a different way, who do not accept that war is inevitable. The wealth of original and workable approaches to peace presented in this book were selected from entries to "Peace 2010," a contest sponsored by *The Christian Science Monitor.* Earl W. Foell, Editor in Chief of the *Monitor* and Richard A. Nenneman, the *Monitor*'s Managing Editor, have written introductions to scenarios that range from catastrophe and activism to insight and diplomacy.

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Utilizing for the first time a clever device that would eventually become standard practice, the Sandinista student leaders

> were always inventing something different to motivate the students, to prevent their enthusiasm from flagging, not merely to obtain our immediate academic objectives, but also our political goal. The object was always circumstantial originality—of whatever kind.

In those days the occasion for "circumstantial originality" might be the readmission of two students who had been expelled, or the replacement of an unpopular dean. Today it is something far more serious—the sorrow of those who have lost their sons in combat; the return of the Somoza regime supposedly represented by the armed opposition; the menace of imperialism (in its North American version); or any other pretext drawn from the heavy propaganda arsenal that allows the government of the FSLN to maintain the Nicaraguan population in an artificial state of agitation, ready to accept its orders.

In Cabezas's book we learn how León Subtiaba's political work in an Indian quarter suddenly reveals "the communicative power of four-letter words." That is, Sandinista student activists find they can reach the Indians by using gutter language—not to convey information or ideology, but merely to attract their attention. They tell the Indians (or the students, or the peasants) what they want to hear. It doesn't matter that these things lie far outside the political or economic parameters of Marxism, or that the activists have not the slightest intention of delivering on their pledges. Each one gets the appropriate medicine, no more, no less. Thus the Sandinista students could speak uninhibitedly of the miracles of the Blessed Virgin to win the support of devout women in the countryside, or of new methods to resolve the land question to win over the peasant; or they could interpolate the ancestral struggle for autonomy into the Sandinista program in order to attract the Indian.

IN MID-1974, after five years of student activism, Omar Cabezas joined the struggle in the mountains at the age of 23. The long ordeal of adapting to the hostile, unknown world of the forest comprises the central part of the book. As the days pass, hard experience begins to overpower Cabezas's early notions of life in the countryside, largely drawn from the books and stories of other guerrillas. His feet are blistered. His waist is bruised from the constant wearing of a pistol-belt. His backpack becomes heavier by the hour; the tropical rain soaks him to the skin. He is forced on marches of interminable duration. It is all a great challenge to his manhood; for example, he evokes the difficulties of setting up a primitive field kitchen in the damp mud by observing that "it is harder to start a fire in the mountains than to get a woman to achieve an orgasm." And he describes his reaction the first time he has to skin a monkey for food: "Actually, it looked very much like a child to us, but none dared say so for fear of seeming like women, who swoon at anything distasteful or grotesque." (Such confidences surely cannot please the radical feminists of North America who enthusiastically support the Sandinista revolution for its purported deference to women.)

MORALE dropped to its lowest point during the Christmas season, when it was impossible not to think about the pleasures of friends and family in the city. It was during that season in 1975 that René Tejada ("Tello"), the best of the guerrilla fighters, was killed, raising serious doubts about the combat capacity of the survivors. (Omar's portrait of this tough and austere personage—once a National Guard lieutenant under Somoza, who subsequently moved on to the Sandinistas, and later still to the PLO for a course in advanced military training—is really nothing more than a quick sketch. This tragic warrior died under less than heroic circumstances, having violated one of the first rules he had taught his students: never confide in a collaborator who could be tortured for vital information.)

But Cabezas's greatest disillusionment is the discovery that the guerrillas in the mountains are isolated and alone, with no military relevance at all. "Fifteen men—give or take a few, certainly never as many as twenty, in those days at least. I felt like returning to the city." The only thing that prevents him from doing so is his hatred of the National Guard, his highly cultivated sense of manhood, and his unconditional acceptance of the Front's instructions—to adapt to the terrain and become genuine guerrilla fighters. That was the only way to withstand an enemy with firepower and numerical superiority.

This meant, first, to overcome boredom, loneliness, and hunger. Indeed, for long periods, those were the only enemies they had to fight, as if by learning to overcome physical challenges they were, in effect, inflicting defeats on the National Guard. Instead of fighting directly against the dictatorship, they had taken to the mountains to forge and temper their will to do so: to become representative of the new socialist man "beyond the capacities of normal men . . . with greater lung power . . . greater capacity to endure hunger, rain, insects, mosquitoes, loneliness." The struggle in the mountains became a personal war that could have gone on—in fact, would have gone on—indefinitely, had there not occurred a radical shift in the direction of the revolutionary leadership.

FROM the very founding of the FSLN in 1962—and through the years of Cabezas's book (1968-75)—guerrilla war based in the mountains was regarded as the proper method to bring down the Somoza dictatorship. By mid-1976, however, the revolutionary leadership began to divide over tactics. A new faction advanced an "insurrectionary" thesis, proposing to transfer the axis of the struggle from a guerrilla vanguard to that mainstay of the Marxist armature, "the popular masses." Until then the masses (that is, the people) had been assigned a purely auxiliary role, that of supporting the chosen few who (because of their experience, temperament, and ideological certitude) were supposed to bear the main brunt of the battle in the mountains. The new thesis—sustained by a dissident group thereafter known as the *Terceristas*, or the advocates of a "third way"—reversed these roles. Henceforth the guerrilla could act in support of the mass struggle, rather than the other way around.

Awakened from their lethargy by the errors of the dictatorship, by a sharpening of their day-to-day struggle for social justice, and by the inspiration of spectacular coups de main by revolutionary military forces, the masses would (so the theory ran) eventually defeat the enemy through a popular insurrection. The role of the vanguard would be to direct the growing popular unrest and opposition to Somoza, the product of an evident political crisis and broader social and economic problems.

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The Sandinista vanguard would infiltrate labor groups, Christian bodies, women's organizations, and neighborhood councils, and would reorder them around the objective of the revolutionary vanguard, which was, of course, to confront the dictatorship head-on. When the masses showed signs of vacillation (or when democratic sectors of the opposition began to retreat), they would reinforce their militancy and deepen the mood of revolutionary agitation through armed actions. Everything was directed toward transforming the masses into an actively insurrectionary force.

THE *Terceristas* also departed from the historic practice of the guerrilla vanguard on another important point. They sought alliances with the more traditional sectors of the opposition. At just about this time the so-called Group of Twelve emerged as the tip of the political lance in the struggle against Somoza. A cohort of businessmen, intellectuals, and religious leaders appeared, all unimpeachably respectable. (Three or four were actually members of the Sandinista Front, but this fact surfaced only later.) They were of considerable utility outside the country, obtaining support and credibility for the Sandinista Front in places where it might otherwise have been in scant supply—in Latin America, in Western Europe, in the United States—at a time when world public opinion was decisively turning against Somoza. Their task was made somewhat simpler by the dictator himself, who stubbornly refused to believe that the game was finally up. The Group of Twelve was eventually incorporated into the first Sandinista Cabinet after Somoza's fall, although those of its members who had never been members of the FSLN—the most notable being Arturo Cruz—very quickly resigned and broke with the new regime.

Finally, the *Terceristas* adopted for public consumption a democratic political program, offering political pluralism, a mixed economy, and a nonaligned foreign policy. But this was nothing more than a formula to win the blessing of the Nicaraguan business community and the support of foreign countries in the struggle to overthrow Somoza. The strategic objective of the Front remained what it always had been: to seize the total power of the state.

The *Terceristas'* new program provoked a schism within the ranks of the Front. Omar Cabezas's story ends at about this time. The division was actually more personal and strategic than ideological, and in the final victorious phase of the revolution the different tendencies were reunited. Still, the schism left a legacy of bad feeling in Sandinista ranks, which could conceivably reappear in some future situation requiring complex and controversial decisions. Even now discussion of the schism is forbidden—for this reason the second part of *Fire from the Mountain*, which was to deal with events after 1975, has been delayed, and perhaps will never be written. The subject will remain closed until a thoroughgoing purge within the secret council that governs the Sandinista republic brings the relevant documents to light—for example, the death sentences decreed in the final testament of Carlos Fonseca, the "father of the revolution," and all the incriminating materials drafted in the heat of intra-party controversy. The location of such papers remains a secret, but it is doubtful that they have been destroyed.

AT THE END of *Fire from the Mountain*, Omar listens to some anecdotes about General Sandino related by a peasant by the name of Don Leandro. This octogenarian ends his account by offering Cabezas his grandsons for the struggle. And on this note Cabezas rousingly closes his book: the sacrifice is profoundly moving for him, as indeed it will be for most readers. But the participation of the Nicaraguan peasantry is nothing new in our history. These people have always made good soldiers. The bloody history of our peasant class has found its highest literary expression in the verse play of Pablo Antonio Cuadra, *Por los caminos van los campesinos:*

> *De dos en dos, de diez en diez, de cien en cien,*
> *de mil en mil, descalzos van los campesinos con*
> *la chamarra y el fusil a la guerra civil.*
>
> Two by two, ten by ten, score by score,
> barefoot peasants march off to civil war.

The peasants of Nicaragua have always known how to face death, unafraid, under all of the banners that fortune and the tragic turns of our country's history have placed them—those of Zelaya, of Chamorro, even of a truant like the elder Somoza, who was capable of inspiring a fierce loyalty among his junior officers and NCOs. The heroism of the Nicaraguan peasant will never be the exclusive patrimony of a single party, much less that of a self-appointed vanguard.

Finally there is the story of Omar and Claudia. She is the object of something approaching courtly love, an idealized figure; the very memory of her gives Omar the strength and the capacity to endure the sacrifices imposed by the mountain. A note announcing her decision to end the romance comes as a complete surprise. She explains that she has fallen in love with one of the other revolutionaries while Omar has been away. He spends the night in his bed of corn leaves plotting an exquisite vengeance. Finally he decides to write her a letter, but his ideological training

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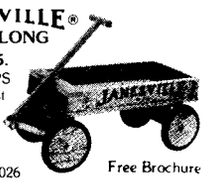

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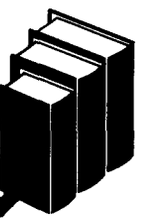

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comes to his aid. What the hell: his real reason for living is the struggle for the liberation of Nicaragua. The next morning, while he peels an orange in the shade of a tree, he dispenses with his memories of Claudia as easily as he separates the fruit from its skin. Omar appears to be in full accord with one of the fundamental principles of the Mexican school of machismo, which is that the love of a woman can never be equal to the pleasures of friendship between two men, much less be permitted to come between the solidarity that unites revolutionary comrades.

The same political principle that informs this episode now shapes television commercials in Nicaragua, in which the Ministry of Interior tells our students that their first point of personal reference ought to be their party comrades rather than their families, who might cause them to lapse into a reactionary, pro-imperialist posture (putting their private happiness before the needs of the state), or simply to fall under the influence of the Church and conventional notions of morality. This theme of consecration to the revolutionary cause has reappeared in other forms as well.

IT FORMS the staple, for example, of some horrendous shorts produced by the Sandinista Film Institute, in which, characteristically, a young student couple is at odds over the role of the revolution in their lives. The young man proposes to join the army or the militia, while the girl—depicted by an actress who pulls out all the stops in an attempt to appear frivolous or empty-headed, awash in tasteless costume jewelry, and no doubt an admirer of Michael Jackson—begs him to remain at home. (Unlike the foreigner who often thrills to such cheap morality plays, the Nicaraguan viewer knows why the girl is so frantic. She has no desire to see her lover sacrificed for a cause in which he does not fully believe, only to leave her a widow before her time and his mourning mother the helpless target of those who would exploit her for propaganda purposes.)

In the film, of course, the boy finally goes off to war, followed by a long montage—the cliché of so many Soviet war epics—that shows him abandoning his love for a mere woman for something far purer and more sacred, namely, devotion to the cause of the party. The army leaders tender a fraternal embrace to the new recruit; and in short order an unseasoned student is transformed into an exemplary internationalist fighter, decorations and all. The final shot shows a sea of students, raising their rifles in the Plaza de la Revolución in Managua and shouting, "If Nicaragua could win, so can El Salvador." (This army recruiting slogan, which emphasizes the joy of hardship, seems rather gratuitous in a country where life daily becomes more difficult, where there remain few means of subsistence apart from the state.)

THE LAST TIME I saw Omar Cabezas was at the end of 1983 at a meeting of the Sandinista Association of Cultural Workers: a kind of kindergarten for writers that the wife of Daniel Ortega ruled with an iron hand, punishing dissidents and rewarding the obedient with trips to Moscow and Havana and invitations to official receptions. The meeting was called to alert us to the visit that afternoon of an important German writer. As a writer and an official of the Ministry of the Interior, it was Omar's job to orient us. He said that Günter Grass was a progressive person, but that he was not reliable. What he would say outside the country would depend on what he would hear from us. (If it had been someone reliable like Gabriel García Márquez, the Interior Ministry would certainly not have intervened.) In any event, it seems all went well, since the author of *The Tin Drum* is today one of the most open defenders of Sandinismo.

The transformation of Omar Cabezas into a "new man" through his experience in the mountains, and his subsequent promotion to liberator of his people, is of an entirely superficial nature, somewhat similar to the development of an athlete's muscles through intensive training, or a soldier's skills through a basic combat course. Most emphatically, such a process (which Carlos Fuentes calls his "difficult and beautiful journey") does not include a love of liberty and democracy. The fact that the Sandinista struggle was morally correct in its fundamental aim to overthrow Somoza is, alas, no longer the point, for overpowering everything was (and is) a twisted ideological vision that pointed (and still points) ineluctably toward totalitarianism. In effect, the war against Somoza provided the Sandinistas with a convenient rationale to construct a state in which they would enjoy unlimited power. A peculiar transfiguration occurs: the humility of the guerrilla in the mountains reemerges as the arrogance of power.

The guerrilla experience of the vanguard did not serve to purge its members of their personal problems, to the misfortune of Nicaragua. The same disturbed individuals who yesterday took to the mountains govern our country today—violent, rancorous, frustrated, but now without the stoicism that once dulled the edge of their personal contradictions. In power, they have given free rein to their darkest emotions—arrogance, revanchism, ambition—while demanding the strictest sacrifices from the rest of the Nicaraguan population. In effect, they have transferred the sufferings of the forest to the city; they have brought the mountains to the streets of Managua, converting the country into one vast guerrilla encampment. These men and women are incapable of bringing peace to our country, since their own troubled souls have never known a moment of repose.

AFTER THE FALL of Somoza, the deepest aspirations of the Nicaraguan people, of which the revolutionary leadership had ample opportunity to learn during its years of struggle, were pushed into the background. The defense of revolutionary power became the only objective of the new regime. Not national reconstruction, but ideological victory. When the counterrevolution made its appearance (as the Marxists expected, and even hoped, in a comic way, that it would), the revolutionary leaders insisted upon interpreting it not as the result of their own errors and misdeeds, but as the response of a defeated social class. Political fanaticism replaced the idealism that inspired the fight against Somoza.

Today the dominant Sandinista ideology is a spurious Marxism, stripped of its humanistic values and reduced to the bare bones of totalitarian necessity. A truly democratic socialism, creative and free, which the Sandinistas once promised, exists only as a myth for the consumption of innocents, tourists, left-wing intellectuals, and organizers of international writers' congresses—foreigners who after brief visits to Nicaragua return to their own countries to defend a system they do not truly know and would never themselves accept if by some misfortune they were forced to endure it. □

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SOPHIA'S CHOICE

The Diaries of Sophia Tolstoy translated by Cathy Porter with an introduction by R. F. Christian

(Random House, 1,043 pp., $35)

"The biggest man, if not the greatest artist, in all Russian literary history" is the way Mirsky describes Tolstoy in his still-standard *History of Russian Literature*. Born in 1828 when none of the writers we associate with the Russian 19th century (apart from Pushkin) had yet published, he outshone and then outlived them all, active right up to his death a scant seven years before the revolutions of 1917. Everything about him is monumental. *War and Peace* runs to some 1,200 pages, *Anna Karenina* to nearly 800; the fullest edition of his works in Russian fills 90 large volumes.

When 18-year-old Sophia Andreevna Behrs married him in 1862, her biography took on a similar amplitude. The only woman in Tolstoy's life during the next 48 years, she bore their first child in 1863 and their 16th in 1888, when she was 44 and he 60; all but three of them survived. Her formidable energies went to nursing and caring for the children; to copying her husband's manuscripts (she is reported to have written out the text of *War and Peace* seven times); to managing the estate; to entertaining innumerable guests, welcome and unwelcome; to sewing clothes for the great man, suffering his sexual demands while longing for a "pure" love and a partnership of equals, simultaneously admiring and resenting his genius. After 42 years of marriage she published a cycle of prose poems under the pseudonym "A Tired Woman." It was called "Groans."

From the start she and her husband had communed through an exchange of diaries (a dubious custom, as both of them came belatedly to realize, though she was still making copies of his the year before she died), and her shock at reading of his bachelor "depravities" persisted undimmed into old age. When in the 1880s he renounced family happiness as an ideal and began moving in directions where she could not follow him (for reasons both temperamental and practical), her unhappiness was deepened by a growing concern about how posterity would regard her.

"Why," she asks him in a letter of 1895 (after yielding to temptation and reading his now-locked diaries), "do you always refer to me so spitefully in your diaries, whenever you mention my name? Why do you want future generations to abuse me as your *evil, frivolous* wife, who made you so unhappy?" Earlier that year, however, she had noted in her own: "I am afraid I cannot resist complaining about Lev Nikolaevich whenever I write my diary"—and later, during an especially wrenching crisis: "This diary of mine has pushed him off the pedestal he has spent his entire life erecting for himself."

Her diary, too, is monumental in its way, covering the 57 years from their marriage to her death in 1919. Partial even as a record of her own experience, it slights the relatively happy years (some 70 pages for the first two decades), and contains long gaps as well as a good many lumps. At the beginning of 1895 she notes, "I must write in my diary—what a pity I have written so little during my life," and 600 pages follow—at least 450 of them previously unpublished in English—filled variously with pained reflections, workaday notations, vivid scenes, weather reports, outraged self-justification, baffled love, warranted self-pity. She wrote, by her own admission, chiefly when she felt upset, depressed, or frustrated.

What can we make of this enormous mass of undigested—and in good part indigestible—raw material? Professor R. F. Christian, an accomplished Tolstoy scholar, shies away from the question: his judicious introduction aims instead at placing the diaries in biographical perspective and underlining the dangers of drawing conclusions from them alone. Still, as he remarks, "it would be unthinkable to write a serious biography of Tolstoy without drawing on them extensively," and those whose interest lies chiefly in Tolstoy will in fact find a great deal of interest here: a vivid picture of daily life at Yasnaya Polyana, as well as of the frailties (if seldom the strengths) that underlie the familiar public image of Tolstoy.

FOR THAT PURPOSE, however, a volume a fraction the size of this one might have sufficed. The translator's own introduction suggests why she has opted for the full exhibit; in it Ms. Porter enters an energetic and eloquent brief on behalf of the diarist. Tolstoy is seen there only as man and husband, and as the figure he cuts evolves from the suspect to the monstrous it is impossible not to feel a lively sympathy for the woman who had to cope with all that.

From such a standpoint, the cumulative effect of reading these alternately artless and graphic jottings—in English, in 1986—becomes the main thing, transcending our interest in Leo or Sophia Tolstoy as individuals. Here is the paradigmatic voice of a woman who, brought up to make husband and family her whole world, records the consequences over half a century.

—At 20: "I often think . . . that he must find this female world of ours insufferably boring, and that I cannot possibly make him happy, that I am a good nursemaid, but nothing more. No intelligence, education or talent, nothing. . . . Now he secretly hates me." (November 3, 1864)

—At 21: "Now I am well again and not pregnant—it terrifies me how often I have been in that condition." (February 25, 1865)

—At 23: "It was drummed into me that I should love my husband, and that I should be a good and honorable wife and mother. All this is written in our ABCs—and what complete rubbish it is too. I know now that one should learn *not* to love, to dissemble, to be cunning and to hide one's faults. . . . The main thing, though, is not to love. Why did I love him so intensely! And what can I do with this love, which has brought me nothing but suffering and humiliation?" (September 12, 1867)

—At 35: "I sit waiting for my confinement, which may start at any moment and is overdue. The thought of this new baby fills me with gloom; my horizons have become so narrow, and my world is such a small and dismal place." (December 18, 1879)

—At 43: "Sweet gentle Lyovochka will

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soon be back—this is my life and I revel in it and thank God for it, for in it I have found true *goodness* and *happiness*." (July 3, 1887)

—At 46: "I am so used to living for Lyovochka and the children rather than for myself that I feel uneasy if a day passes when I do not do something for them. . . . How I regret now that my perpetual emotional dependence on the man I love has killed all my other talents. . . ." (December 27, 1890)

The oscillating pattern of Sophia Andreevna's frustrations show her situation to be a broadly typical one—as she herself recognized: "To each his fate. Mine was to be the auxiliary element to my husband." But she indicates a narrower typicality when she adds: "And that is good; at least I have served a great writer who is worthy of the sacrifice."

Nonetheless she found it harder and harder to find satisfaction in supporting genius. There is a poignant entry on March 13, 1902, sparked by her reading of Emerson on that subject:

> For a *genius* one has to create a peaceful, cheerful, comfortable home; a genius must be fed, washed, and dressed, must have all his works copied out innumerable times, must be loved and spared all cause for jealousy, so that he can be calm; then one must feed and educate the innumerable children fathered by this genius, whom he cannot be bothered to care for himself, as he has to commune with all the Epictetuses, Socrateses and Buddhas, and aspire to be like them himself. . . . I have served a *genius* for forty years. Hundreds of times I have felt my intellectual energy stir within me, and all sorts of desires—a longing for education, a love of music and the arts. . . . And time and again I have crushed and smothered all these longings, and now and to the end of my life I shall somehow or other continue to serve my *genius*.

What kept getting crushed was the dream of an alternative life—autonomous, richer, more various. "I have never travelled anywhere," she writes in her 37th year of marriage, "neither abroad nor within Russia."

Increasingly trapped and unhappy, Sophia Andreevna shows in these diaries no empathetic awareness of others, no impulse to try to view the world from angles other than her own. Already in the first months of marriage, she had remarked of her husband's enthusiasm for educating the Yasnaya Polyana peasants: "He disgusts me with his talk of the 'people.' I feel it is either me, representing his family, or the people, whom L. loves so passionately." (October 23, 1862)

For all her intelligence and broad reading, she was not a reflective observer. Without a trace of irony or humor, her voluminous narrative describes a small world that revolves around her progressively baffled desire for the one kind of love and happiness that she could conceive. The provocations of her aging and misogynous husband—as, for instance, his heated insistence that marriage is nothing more than legally sanctioned copulation—were wounding, no doubt about it. But the idea that she herself might have had some role in eliciting them seems never seriously to have occurred to her.

So she can give us scenes but not portraits, the flux of feeling but few perceptions that illuminate more than the sympathetic but ultimately tedious perceiver herself. This book resolves

Our Days

I can stay what I am, a little crazy in old jeans,
And drive across town to look for a fight.

It's Saturday. At our studio we spar on that day,
Roundhouse and spinback, reverse punch

And ax kick that's a broken branch on a shoulder.
Ten minutes with black James and Filipino Bobby,

Dennis the white gardener. We rest against the wall,
Wet as snails, and talk jobs or promised jobs,

Some brown honey in our lives, that weekend's game.
Wind is what we want. Our hands lie at our sides.

We get up to our feet, stretch, and throw practice kicks
At the air, and bowing to one another,

Begin to make bruises where the heart won't go,
A hurt won't stay. I like that, the thrust of bone,

And how if I'm hit I'll step in, almost crazed,
And sweep, back fist, and maybe bring him down.

Later, I dress, cup and shin guards under my jeans
And with a nappy head friend walk around the city.

America needs a beating. We look for these people,
Happily do our part, and race around buildings,

He to black Oakland and I to the white side of Berkeley.
My hands hurt in the shower. My face stings over dinner,

Where we talk movies, break bread, and test our spelling
—Eurydice, rhomboid, cornucopia—

Because the mind must be as right as the body.
My wife thinks I'm crazy. Still, she clears the table

And stays. Still she joins us in the living room
With magazines and chess. Daughter and I play first.

She makes her move, and while she waits for me,
Spells new words and lifts her dumbbell,

A coke can, twenty reps to an arm. My wife thinks nothing
Of this—it goes on every night.

I make my move and ask our daughter, Who's Atlas?
She doesn't look up when she takes a rook from me—

The man who holds up the world. I ask about others,
Perseus and the river Styx, and she knows in her way.

I stand up, What is this? I throw a sidekick
And she says, Sidekick . . . but this is better.

She throws a roundhouse, one so perfect that her mother
Puts down her magazine. We smile at our little one,

This child of the 80s. Rising, my wife throws a kick.
I throw another, and daughter spins into a turnback,

Does a knifehand chop that does nothing to the air
—all three of us bouncing from foot to foot,

Spelling words and laughing for the hell of it.

Gary Soto

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again into primordial subjectivity what biographers like Henri Troyat, Cynthia Asquith, and Tikhon Polner were at such pains to distill from her account, complementing it with other testimony in the interests of a more balanced picture.

THE ENTERPRISE, heroic as a feat of translation, is not without its editorial peculiarities. To be sure, much of this material is new in English and of value as such. But the editors of the last and fullest Russian edition (1978)—the one followed here—warn that while restoring "a portion of the cuts" made by their predecessors, they have also introduced "a series of new editorial cuts, chiefly in notations of a particularly intimate character."

The result can be seen in the entry of February 7, 1891, where I have italicized phrases published in the first Russian edition but omitted in the present one:

> These past two evenings I wanted to drive to Kozlovka with Lyovochka, but on two occasions he rode over on his horse, as if deliberately to spite me. He is being stiff, sullen, and unpleasant again. I was silently angry with him last night, for he kept me up until two in the morning. He spent such a long time washing downstairs that I thought he must be ill, for washing is quite an event for him. *He told me that his feet had become so encrusted that they had begun to hurt under the scabs. And I was sickened with disgust. After that he lay down and read for a long time. For him I'm only in the way when he doesn't need me for his own satisfaction. These days of my revulsion at the physical side of my husband's life are terribly hard for me. But I cannot—simply cannot and never will—get used to the filth and the smell.* I try to see only his spiritual side, and I can do this when he is being good to me.

I have not tried to estimate how many such new suppressions this volume contains, but it is clear that failing to collate the two Russian editions meant sacrificing an important opportunity: this could have been the fullest as well as the most interesting version in any language.

As it is, Ms. Porter has confined her editorial initiatives to prefacing each year's entries with her own succinct historical summaries. For the most part unconnected with anything mentioned in the diaries themselves, these ignore literary, cultural, and intellectual life to concentrate on government repression and popular discontent. They are plainly meant to serve as ominous background music, The Gathering Storm to which the domestic diarist is oblivious as she records her moods, chores, family cares—and more than occasionally matters that are by turns curious, bizarre, humdrum, or supremely moving.

I close with one example of each:

> This evening we looked through an academic book about Pushkin's library. He built it up and chose all the books *himself*. Our library here, however, is completely random; people send us books from all corners of the earth, and some of the books are very good and some are utter rubbish! Lev Nik. has almost never bought any books *himself*, most of them have been sent, and our library has grown up, without any shape, form or guiding principles. (October 11, 1910)

> This morning we had a visit from a 30-year-old Romanian who had castrated himself at the age of 18 after reading *The Kreutzer Sonata*. He then took to working on the land—just 19 acres—and was terribly disillusioned to see that Tolstoy writes one thing but lives in luxury. He was obviously very hurt, said he wanted to cry, kept repeating, "My God, my God! How can this be? What shall I tell them at home?" and questioned everyone, seeking an explanation of this contradiction. Then a rich deaf-mute arrived from Kiev with his friend, a barber, especially to make Tolstoy's acquaintance. Goldenweiser came and played chess with L.N. (August 31, 1909)

> Lev Nikolaevich got up feeling quite fresh and had a good day. He took some herbs and two rhubarb tablets. He is still constipated. Then he played vint. I worked on my memoirs all day, which plunged me into depression. (January 22, 1910)

> Lev Nik. has left! My God! He left a letter telling me not to look for him as he has gone for good, to live out his old age in peace. The moment I read those words I rushed outside in a frenzy of despair and jumped into the middle pond, where I swallowed a lot of water; Sasha and Bulgakov dragged me out with the help of Vanya Shuraev. Utter despair. Why did they save me? (October 28, 1910)

DONALD FANGER

Donald Fanger is professor of Slavic and Comparative Literature at Harvard University. His most recent book is *The Creation of Nikolai Gogol* (Harvard University Press).

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BRAIN TEASERS

The Mind's New Science: A History of the Cognitive Revolution by Howard Gardner

(Basic Books, 448 pp., $22.50)

What do we know and how do we come to know it? Variants of the question have occupied self-reflective man for at least a couple of millennia, since the time of the ancient Greeks. Issues of mind and knowing were long the playground of philosophers, but since the mid-19th century the domain of consideration has enlarged to include several scientific disciplines. Together these disciplines have come to constitute "cognitive science"—the term became current in the early 1970s—"a contemporary, empirically based effort," as Howard Gardner puts it, "to answer long-standing epistemological questions—particularly those concerned with the nature of knowledge, its components, its sources, its development, and its deployment."

Gardner, a psychologist currently affiliated with the Harvard School of Education, discerns a number of key features in cognitive science. It holds to the faith that computers are essential to understanding and modeling the operations of the human mind. More generally, it is premised upon the belief that the mind possesses certain universal modes of cognition—sets of "mental representations" that can interact with each other and that make for what the MIT philosopher and psychologist Jerry Fodor has called a natural "language of thought." Cognitive science is thus occupied, Gardner explains, with determining the symbols, rules, and images of mental operations, and with exploring how these representations are contrasted, joined, or transformed.

To the cognitive scientist, the language of thought is separate from the biological or neurological activities of the brain. Mental states may exist as expressions of the brain's matter, but they may be understood and analyzed independently of any particular configuration of neurons and synapses. They stand to the physical brain as the computer's software—which may be manipulated in its own logical terms—does to its hardware. (Programs may be written in the computer language BASIC, for example, that will run on any number of different machines.) Like a computer's software, the language of thought deals with inputs from, and returns outputs to, the external world. But in the view of cognitive scientists, it exists wholly independently of the sociocultural environment. It is inborn, primary, yet sufficiently rich and flexible to carry out the numerous cognitive processes of which human beings are capable.

In this regard, cognitive science hews to the "nature" side in the historic debate over whether nature or nurture predominates in shaping qualities of mind. The question is, of course, ideologically charged. Yet it is not ideology, or anything connected to it, that concerns Gardner, but a grand vision of what cognitive science is and what it might become. *The Mind's New Science* is, indeed, a breathtakingly wide-ranging exploration of the current problems and future prospects of the field cast against the history, subject matter, and interconnections of its constituent disciplines.

Gardner stresses that the antecedents of a science of mental representations are to be found in the tradition of philosophical rationalism—in Plato's argument that the rudiments of geometric understanding are implanted in the mind at birth, in Descartes's contention that experience only stimulates the expression in the mind of ideas that are already innately present there. He also points to the countertrend of philosophical empiricism, early exemplified by Locke and Hume, who held that knowledge of the world is constructed from external sensory impressions. Kant, who attempted to synthesize the rationalist and empiricist approaches, ranks high in Gardner's pantheon of philosophers, not least because he recognized how, at least conceptually, an inborn mental architecture might relate to, and obtain knowledge of, the real physical world by processing the sensations received from it.

Still, conceptual models by themselves are not scientifically decisive, and through much of the 19th century philosophy of mind remained torn between rationalist and empiricist schools. At mid-century a British savant was moved to observe: "There is no department of knowledge in which so little progress has been made as in that of mental philosophy." At the time, part of mental philosophy, following the mode of the natural sciences, was becoming experimental, and by late in the century the discipline of philosophy had spun off several separate mental sciences, notably psychology.

A leading mode of psychological experimentation was introspectionism, in which participants were subjected to various stimuli and asked to reflect about the nature of their thought patterns. After 1900 the introspectionist mode earned increasing censure from a young, mostly American school of scientists who became known as behaviorists. The rebels insisted that any science of behavior must, first, rely on public observations quantifiable and reproducible by any scientist; and second, deal only with behavior, not with such unobservables as mind, thinking, intentions, or mental representations. From the 1920s through the 1940s, behaviorism dominated two disciplines at the heart of cognitive science—psychology and linguistics. Under the circumstances, Gardner laments, "questions about the nature of human language, planning, problem solving, imagination, and the like could only be approached stealthily and with difficulty, if they were tolerated at all."

BUT by the late 1940s serious challenges to behaviorism were under way, partly because certain epistemological cracks had appeared in its facade, but more important, because recent developments in other fields pointed to the possibility of creating a quite different science of mind. The study of brain injuries suffered in World War II, for example, yielded much new knowledge of the relationships between specific types of damage and cognitive incapacities. The war had also stimulated considerable progress in computer-related areas such as feedback and control systems. The successful construction of the first digital computers demonstrated that machines could perform logical operations. It also suggested to some that mental activities

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might be modeled in a serial, digital form, and to many others that the computer could be used to test models—serial-digital and otherwise—of how mental machinery worked.

SEVERAL lines of thinking converged at the time to underpin the possible similarity of the rational mind and the computing machine. There were the extensions of the logical construct of the British mathematician Alan Turing, holding that one could program a machine so that it would be impossible to differentiate its answers to questions from those a human being might supply. There was also the emergence of information theory, a basic tenet of which is that items—or "bits"—of information can be dealt with independently of their content. The mathematician Norbert Wiener remarked, "Information is information, not matter or energy"—a conceptualization that made it possible to think of the processing of information as such, apart from any particular mechanism of communication. In 1948 Wiener synthesized these lines of thinking in his influential book *Cybernetics*—a term he coined for the theory of control and communication in animals and machines. By the mid-1950s a small group of pioneers in the field of artificial intelligence—the term seems to have been coined by one of them, John McCarthy—confidently advanced the conjecture that "every aspect of learning or any other feature of intelligence can in principle be so precisely described that a machine can be made to simulate it."

Among the group was Herbert Simon, later a Nobel laureate in economics, who has recalled that in the late 1940s, when he was a graduate student, a kind of "invisible college" was forming in cognitive science. The college gathered institutional stimulation from several philanthropic foundations and at various centers of higher learning, including the Institute of Advanced Study in Princeton, New Jersey, where J. Robert Oppenheimer, the director, regularly invited a group of cognitively oriented psychologists to discuss work in their field. By the mid-1950s the invisible college could claim decided scientific progress, notably in psychology, artificial intelligence, and linguistics.

In 1956 the psychologist George Miller published his finding that human beings seemed able to deal with only seven items in their short-term memories. Miller's report was arresting for cognitivists, not least because it revealed genuine limitations in human information-processing capacities, and hence spotlighted the importance of exploring the nature and structure of a central cognitive processing mechanism. That same year the psychologist Jerome Bruner, together with Jacqueline Goodnow and George Austin, published *A Study of Thinking*, which addressed the key problem of how people group a set of elements into categories. Their work departed from a behaviorist approach in several respects, perhaps most important in focusing on the informational properties of the response strategies of their subjects; they sought to get at the mental, cognitive qualities that processed and searched over external stimuli.

IN 1955 Simon and his colleague Alan Newell had begun to write various higher-order computer languages with the aim of equipping the computer to manipulate symbols so as to solve logical problems. In 1956 their Logic Theorist Program actually proved a logical proposition contained in the *Principia Mathematica* of Bertrand Russell and Albert North Whitehead. The feat demonstrated, Gardner reports, first, that "computers could engage in behavior that, if exhibited by humans, would unambiguously be considered intelligent"; and second, that "the steps through which the programs pass in the course of proving theorems bear a non-trivial resemblance to the steps observed in human problem solving."

The mid-1950s, too, saw Noam Chomsky's reorientation of linguistics in a cognitive direction. Chomsky proposed the sentence: "Colorless green ideas sleep furiously," and its reverse. Both were gibberish, but, he observed, although the reverse was utter nonsense, the sentence itself did convey something about ideas. Certain features of the sentence resonated with what Chomsky held was an innate knowledge of syntax. The behavioral school of linguistics had tended to the view that syntax could not be studied independently of semantics, i.e., meaning, and its members had taken as their task the empirical analysis of actual utterances to seek regularities of observable language. Chomsky considered such utterances, which ordinarily contain many slips, only an impure expression of pure mentalistic entities (syntactic knowledge), which enter into people's ability to generate and comprehend sentences. Chomsky insisted that the aim of linguistics should be to explain this tacit knowledge by devising a formal set of rules that could generate any conceivable grammatical sentence and then by testing those rules against native speakers' judgments of grammaticality.

In the 1960s the invisible college of cognitive science became highly visible, energized by ample funding and given focus by Bruner and Miller's establishment at the beginning of the decade of the Harvard Center for Cognitive Studies. Intellectually, the decade was bracketed by the publication in 1960 of *Plans and the Structure of Behavior*, in which Miller and his colleagues, sounding "the death knell for standard behaviorism," to use Gardner's words, called for approaching behavior in the cybernetic terms of actions, feedback, and adjustments; and by the appearance in 1969 of Herbert Simon's *The Sciences of the Artificial*, a call for treating the mind and the computer as physical systems that transform, process, and manipu-

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late symbols. In the 1970s, its progress further advanced by aid from the Alfred P. Sloan Foundation, the field of cognitive science was well enough established to organize its own learned society and issue its own journal.

GARDNER'S account of all this is substantial (the historical material constitutes more than half the book), richly informative, and immensely valuable as a pioneering treatment of the cognitive revolution since the 1940s. However, his attempt to cover the history of so many disciplines—not only philosophy, psychology, linguistics, and artificial intelligence, but also anthropology and neural science—even in just their cognitive aspects, borders, perhaps inevitably, on the encyclopedic. Although Gardner, the author of several other general-audience books about psychology, writes in clear, energetic prose, his presentation is often torrential and requires concentrated attention, particularly from the reader only casually versed in the many subjects he covers.

Gardner sketches, with honesty and clarity if also with noticeable regret, the pre-1940s trends (mostly behavioral) in each discipline that delayed the advent of cognitive science, but he does not—and does not pretend to—provide a review of each balanced across its historically diverse complexity. He is more concerned with calling appreciative attention to precursors of cognitive science. He spotlights with relish the anthropology of Franz Boas, which held that so-called primitive and modern peoples all possess the same cognitive potential; Gestalt psychology, which focused upon the way that the brain organizes perceptual inputs; Jean Piaget's research agenda, the exploration via experiment of long-standing epistemological issues such as the mind's construction of time, space, number, and causality; the linguistics of Ferdinand de Saussure, who in Gardner's words "viewed language as a cognitive system contained within the head of the individual speaker," and of Roman Jakobson, who analyzed language in terms of phonemes, a typology of utterances indicative of universal physical and psychological properties that evolution had wired into the brain.

Yet the discussion of precursors is more illustrative than historical. Gardner does little to demonstrate linkages between the work of early and later cognitivists; with a few exceptions, they are advanced as exemplars worthy of celebration rather than as actors in a historically connected continuum. Gardner also seems to attribute the origins of the cognitive revolution itself too sweepingly to the inspiration of the computer, information science, and cybernetics. Although Chomsky, for example, may have been influenced by all three, his invention of transformational linguistics owed a good deal to a concern with certain issues in formal logic. What Gardner has written here—with unabashed forthrightness, to be sure—is less a history than a historically informed brief, not only for cognitive science as such but for his particular vision of it.

BRIEFS ARISE from conditions of contentiousness. Since the late 1970s, in Gardner's view, cognitive science has fallen into a degree of disarray over its future agenda, not least because the high expectations of the 1950s have been far from fulfilled. Chomsky's specific linguistic ideas are nowadays much disputed and shared by only a minority of workers in syntax (though it must be added that many linguists still hold to his original view that the programmatic task of the field is to develop generative rules of grammar). Psychological studies of responses to story-telling suggest that the mind cannot be understood as a pure sequential information processor; people bring to encounters with stories a set of prior expectations and a propensity to integrate and reorder the materials they apprehend. Then, too, although information is not matter or energy, it does have content, a fact that has undermined the early content-independent information-processing models of the mind on which the field of artificial intelligence was founded. Syntactic instructions to computers do not enable them to differentiate between two different meanings of the same symbol—for example, "per," as in the expressions "per mile" or "per chance." Context obviously counts in cognitive processes.

So too, it is now recognized, do strategies, intuitions, approximations, biases, beliefs, and untold other propensities. Human beings, in short, do not approach many tasks in a wholly rational fashion involving step-by-step symbolic processing. All this has driven cognitivists into what Gardner calls "the computational paradox." The paradox lies in the fact that while the digital serial computer appears in many ways to be an inadequate model of human cognition, the recognition of that inadequacy has come from attempts to study cognitive processes in strict accord with models of computational thinking.

OTHER sharp challenges to cognitivism have arisen from within and without its central domain. Dramatic advances in neural science seem to have been taken by some to imply that one day cognitive functions will be describable entirely in terms of the biophysics and biochemistry of neurons. Then, too, the empiricist/environmentalist school of knowing continues to find evidence for its version of mentality. David Hubel and Torsten Wiesel have demonstrated, in work that earned them a Nobel Prize, not only that parts of the visually sensitive nervous system are wired in at birth, but that the development of other, more complex parts depends upon external stimuli. Several leading students of perception hold that this quality of mind is learned through an organism's interaction with its environment, and the power of the environment in molding cognition is evident in the way that prior experience molds responses to story-telling. Although some cognitive anthropologists have found certain seeming regularities in the categorization of colors among different peoples, others insist that even such simple features of cognition must be at least in part the product of culture.

Gardner recognizes the shortcomings of contemporary cognitive science, but declares that the field has nevertheless "come of age." In his view, its major accomplishment has been to establish mental representation—images, rules, transformations, and so on—as essential for the analysis of cognitive functions. He writes:

> Whoever wishes to banish the representational level from scientific discourse would be compelled to explain language, problem solving, classification, and the like strictly in terms of neurological and cultural analysis. The discoveries of the last thirty years make such an alternative most unpalatable.

Gardner is confident that neuroscience will not devour cognitive science. There can be no adequate theory of any activity of the brain, he holds, without a reliable theory of the activity itself. For this reason he places neuroscience at the

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lower bound of cognitive science; and at the upper bound, the culture-entwined discipline of anthropology, or at least that part of it identified with Claude Lévi-Strauss and the structuralist search for universal properties of mind.

The future of cognitive science itself, Gardner contends, will depend in no small part upon the resolution of the computational paradox. The human mind, he notes, may be an amalgam of several kinds of computers, some operating serially, others in parallel, and he takes heart that this possibility promises to shape the next phase of research in artificial intelligence. Gardner expects that artificial intelligence will eventually join with cognitive psychology to form the central region of a unified cognitive science, one that will find its most fruitful orientation in interdisciplinary attacks upon key cognitive issues such as language, visual processing, or logical thought.

Yet the long-term future of the field, he claims, will depend upon how well it meets what he calls the "cognitive challenge"—the mapping of mental representations to neural activity at the one boundary and culture at the other. Indeed, Gardner holds that

> the ultimate goal of cognitive science should be—precisely—to provide a cogent scientific account of how human beings achieve their most remarkable symbolic products: how we come to compose symphonies, write poems, invent machines . . . or construct theories. . . .

A tall, perhaps millennial order, one would think, and most practitioners of cognitive science would be ecstatic to determine, ultimately, just how people walk, utter sentences, or recognize classes of objects. But fields of learning need their visionaries, and cognitive science clearly has one in the author of this prodigiously ambitious book.

DANIEL J. KEVLES

Daniel J. Kevles, a historian at the California Institute of Technology, is the author most recently of *In the Name of Eugenics* (Knopf).

CORRESPONDENCE, *from page 6*

the film—that's why I put it in a footnote. Koenig does not mention that it is a footnote, implying that the passage is taken from the introductions and that it is typical of them. Granted that I might have skipped it, but does one superfluous footnote condemn 138 pages of text to idiocy?

Koenig says that I make "one sensible observation—that several of Sturges's works were concerned with the recapture or punishment of the wife or lover who has abandoned the hero." This "observation" is in fact an extended discussion, which refers to and builds on an earlier summary of Sturges's life. Koenig continues, saying that I do not "note a few especially poignant similarities. When Sturges's wealthy wife Eleanor Hutton asked him how much he wanted to give her a divorce (she owed him about $100,000), he said, 'It will cost you one courteous request, madame, and a polite thank-you when it is all over.' " All of this is in my book, however—Eleanor's question, the $100,000, and the "polite thank-you" line, on pages 11 through 12, their relation to *The Lady Eve* on page 27.

The wonderful title of Koenig's review and the other quotations from Sturges with which she begins are also uncredited borrowings. They were discovered by me in the UCLA library and printed for the first time in *Five Screenplays*. To debit an author for what one regards as damaging and not to credit him for what one admires, or uses, is unfair. To do this in a review that calls his work idiotic is grossly unfair.

BRIAN HENDERSON
Buffalo, New York

PENILE CODE

To the editors:

I thoroughly enjoyed Alex Heard's article "Runaway Hatholamus" (February 3). As a veterinary researcher, I was intrigued by the potential research applications of this discovery. What hatholamic-mediated effect would continuous exposure to daytime TV have on milk production in holstein cows? It has already been demonstrated conclusively that a radio blaring rock 'n' roll in the milking parlor improves milk production. Thank you for suggesting this exciting new avenue of investigation.

Please advise Mr. Heard that "penal implants" are more commonly known as prisoners. My guess is that he was actually referring to "penile implants," a more predictably titillating topic for the likes of a daytime TV talk show hostess named "Sally."

DAVID M. SHERMAN
St. Paul, Minnesota

TRB, *from page 4*

who keeps him supplied with the latest conveniences. Nor does the opulence stop at home. A warm-up show before Drago's exhibition fight in Las Vegas is a lurid extravaganza of soul music and sequins, and Drago has his one human moment when he looks totally bewildered by all the glitter. Rocky's training in the Siberian wilds is not just a contrast to Drago's ultra high-tech workouts; it's an escape from his own lap of luxury, which he proves tough enough to face. (Paulie falls down in a snow drift, whining for junk food.)

In *White Nights*, where the subject is dancers, not boxers, the digs at American culture are on a slightly more sophisticated level. The Soviets taunt Baryshnikov about his artistic stature in the United States: "If you return here," the KGB agent tells the dancer (he's trapped in the USSR when his plane crashes in Siberia), "you'll be respected as a cultural hero. In America, what are you? A curiosity, a passing fad. In a few years, you'll be a has-been." The movie is ironic confirmation of just that: it's a vehicle for bringing Baryshnikov back into the spotlight.

So why are the Soviets so worried? Clearly in a culture as frivolous as America's, propaganda is a lost cause. And so is a real fighting spirit, if you believe some purists like George Kennan. "Show me first an America which has successfully coped with . . . decadence of one sort or another," Kennan once challenged in an interview. "Show me an America that has pulled itself together and is what it ought to be, then I will tell you how we are going to defend ourselves from the Russians."

Whether or not the Soviets believe Kennan (their defense program suggests they don't), their immediate worry is how *they* will cope with imported decadence. As they contemplate cultural exchanges, their real concern isn't that too many Americans are getting inflamed against them. It's that too many Russians will be entertained. Already *Rambo* and *Rocky IV* cassettes are hot on the video black market in Moscow—and imagine the lines for tickets to hear the Beach Boys. The three commissars in *Silk Stockings* certainly lost no time in succumbing to Western pleasures. "Too bad! We can't go back to Moscow," they gleefully sang after their defection. "We are now rotten capitalists, and with any luck we'll soon be more rotten than we ever dreamed."

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LOS ANGELES DIARIST

Treasure Houses

AS EVERYONE KNOWS who lives in Washington, reads society columns, or watches PBS, a traveling show of treasures has been mounted for some time at the National Gallery of Art. This collection of residential fittings is called "The Treasure Houses of Britain: Five Hundred Years of Private Patronage and Art Collecting." As hardly anyone knows, a companion show is now in California: "The Treasure Houses of Los Angeles: 138 Years of Decorating."

THE PIECES DISPLAYED on the left coast, like those in the larger show, reveal signposts to culture through furniture and *objets*. Just as the British belongings reflect a society of homely tweeds and marmalade dogs, the California show bespeaks a life-style of tennis outfits, guacamole dip, and guard dogs. A myriad of periods and styles makes up "The Treasure Houses of Los Angeles." There is the Taj Mahal School, Spaceship Regency, Santa Monica Modern, and Gingerbread Restoration. Perhaps in homage to the great houses of England, some stately Los Angeles mansions have names as well. To be sure, there is no Lacock Abbey in Beverly Hills, but there is Pickfair, which, democratically enough, is coming to be known as Bussfare, in honor of its new owner, Dr. Jerry Buss, the sports entrepreneur. To be perfectly accurate, I should mention that most houses in metropolitan Los Angeles are not known by names, but by numbers; unpretentious designations such as "27214 Pacific Coast Highway," or "P.C.H." as it's known to the natives.

A DISCERNING OBSERVER will note the strong influence of Mission furniture, dating from 1895, patterned after pieces found in California missions established by Spanish settlers. The significance of neighboring Mexico cannot be overlooked. Neither can that of the local gentry. The noble families of L.A. are often in the movie business, which has had its effect on furnishings, if not whole rooms. Hence the old music rooms of countryside castles have metamorphosed, quite understandably, into video centers. Both from a sense of freedom (probably gained from est) and a desire to have the best of everything, the California style is in fact a blend of everything. One can therefore find in Los Angeles a proliferation of periods, all used simultaneously. It is not uncommon to see a tasteful combination of, say, Oriental and Swiss Chalet, or an adobe dwelling with pillars, painted pink, artfully directing the eye to a wall of sliding glass doors. This agglomeration has come to be known as the Tacked On approach to architecture . . . or Tacky for short.

REFERRING TO THE "Guide to the Exhibition," let me share with you some of the highlights of "The Treasure Houses of Los Angeles." The pieces chosen for one of the rooms suggest a nice counterpart to the British "saloon," which was designed to show the triumph of the Baroque wherein the interior displays the work of Huguenot craftsmen after 1685. The Los Angeles equivalent likewise attests to a taste for the exotic. The first treasures one sees are an example of an indigenous California look: overstuffed furniture. In bold colors, reflecting the birds and flora found in the area, are chairs and sofas that accommodate twice the number of people you think they can. The furniture that is not overstuffed makes the wonderful statement of wicker—a very clever use of woven reed designed to hold minimalist cushions. The pièce de résistance in this particular room is a chair by the maker Eero Saarinen. It is of molded plastic and foam rubber.

ON THE STUCCO WALL surfaces are Japanese temple decorations wittily adapted to hold the fresh flowers for which southern California is famous. (The inclusion of these floral arrangements is in no way meant to belittle the nuts and fruits for which California is also justly celebrated.) Ancestor paintings did not seem to be in demand as the American West evolved, so the tastemakers of L.A. favored modern masterpieces by LeRoy Neiman, and for those not in the movie business, canvases done by his imitators. In a nod to the British show, with its "Love Among the Ruins" by Edward Burne-Jones, the Los Angeles Treasure Houses' collection boasts—in honor of the frequent earthquakes—a contemporary watercolor called "The Ruins Among Themselves."

IT IS APPARENT to the trained eye that the English affinity for statuary has not dissipated in Los Angeles, but merely undergone an evolutionary development. With pixieish good humor, the early duennas of design and decor in the film capital introduced the predominant sculptural motif that has lasted to this day. It is, of course, the cherub—often plaster cast, sometimes carved—which serves as silent homage to the city's very name . . . literally, "The City of Angels." It is obvious, walking through "The Treasure Houses of Los Angeles," that these representative pieces denote the Angeleno's commitment to materialism. There is also a subtle feeling, just below the surface, that Sunset Boulevard is not all that far from Chatsworth Lane. To look at California's decorative arts is to realize that there is a continuum: here too is a Queen Elizabeth (Taylor), and the 3rd Earl of Burlington has given way to Prince.

MOVING INTO ANOTHER ROOM, illustrative of the Pueblo Revival houses and Romanesque Ranch style, the viewer is struck by the romance imparted by mid-20th-century artifacts. One piece in particular is an ode to innovative Los Angeles. It is one of the original Steinway concert grand pianos—but with an embellishment. Mr. Dick Clark (who in another time and another place would surely have been knighted for his contribution to television, "American Bandstand") has had electronic experts rig this piano, reportedly worth hundreds of thousands of dollars, with a cassette apparatus that not only records what is played, but turns this magnificent instrument into a player piano, so that the recorded song plays itself back! A prized tune is "Happy Birthday" played by Mr. Barry Manilow in honor of Mr. Clark.

AS YOU CAN SURMISE, "The Treasure Houses of Los Angeles" is a sophisticated, sentimental retrospective of all that is California decor. To miss this exhibition is to neglect what American culture will hand down to the ages.

MARGO HOWARD

Margo Howard lives in her own treasure house in Brentwood, California.

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